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A YEAR'S SERMONS

BY

S. D. McCONNELL, D. D.

Author of "History of the American Episcopal Church," "Sons of God," etc.

NEW YORK

THOMAS WHITTAKER

2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE

1896

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TO THE

CONGREGATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH;

THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE

THE FASCINATION AND THE DESPAIR OF

THE PREACHER,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS

WITH HOPEFULNESS AND DOUBTFULNESS

INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THESE sermons, in their present form, were never preached. Indeed, if one should speak with precision, they may scarcely be called sermons. They were prepared weekly during a year for the editorial page of the *Philadelphia Press*. They are an attempt to speak to that large, and it is to be feared, growing class of men and women who are not hostile to religion, but who are outside the circle of Christ's Disciples.

PHILADELPHIA, LENT, 1896.

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A YEAR'S SERMONS.

I.

THE LIFE BY FAITH.

"The just shall live by faith."—ROMANS i. 17.

"JUST," in Scriptural language, is practically the same as "religious." The phrase "shall live" does not refer at all to the future life, but to a method of living in this world. Bearing these meanings in mind, the text might be paraphrased to read, "The religious man conducts his life by the principle of faith."

We may as well candidly confess at the outset, that no sane man would consent to live by faith if he had it in his power to live by knowledge. For anyone to start upon a path whose end he cannot see, and with the road to which he is unfamiliar, is simply folly, unless there is some strong compulsion to justify him. Occasionally, a foolish fellow does start upon such a venture, being attracted chiefly by its possible peril, but he is never regarded as a wise man by his friends, and, in fact, is not a wise man. The sensible man wants to know; he wants to know why he does such and such things; he wants to know as

accurately as possible where they lead to and what the consequence will be. If it were possible for men to regulate their lives by knowledge, the other method, living by faith, might be dismissed at once as the idle dream of a visionary. But a little sober thought, and looking the facts of life in the face, will show anyone that in the really important things knowledge is not available. By knowledge I mean scientific accuracy, Exact knowledge breaks down the instant it has to do with persons instead of with things; for there is in every person with which one has to do, an uncertain and unknowable element. In ordinary human friendships, for instance, the friendship is not based upon knowledge, but precedes the knowledge. Any friendship or affection which can give a scientific account of itself, of the reason why it exists, shows by that very fact that it is not a *bona fide* affection at all. One is attached to his friends, and one loves his lover, and in each case it is, at the last analysis, an act of faith. He does it before he knows why he does it. So that, then, one need not be surprised when he is told, the instant he enters into the realm of religion, that he is in an area where, in the nature of things, exact information is not available. This can be seen by looking in two directions: First at what we familiarly call "morals."

One of the most interesting studies of the present time is concerning the origin of the moral

code and of the moral sense. It is not my purpose to enter into that discussion at all, but merely to remind you of the fact that, let the origin of the moral sense or moral code be what it will—whether in evolutionary experience or in an immediate divine revelation, the fact still remains that the internal feeling which bids us do what our moral sense tells us, is a feeling which will give no account of itself. It is simply a feeling, and that is all you can say about it. It bids us do certain things and abstain from doing certain other things, and it speaks in an imperative voice. We can obey it or let it alone, but the binding force of the voice is a thing of which we can give no explanation.

Every good deed, therefore, is an act of faith. If I restrain myself from the gratification of an appetite because I believe the gratification to be wrong, I deny myself an immediate pleasure because I actually have faith in an authority which overrides the appetite. If I take a dollar out of my own pocket and give it to a hungry man, I do it in obedience to a feeling which is, in its essence, faith. Now it is perfectly true that all the maxims of prudence are against this method of conducting one's life. "Poor Richard" has no end of good counsels which are beyond comparison wiser than the counsels of the Apostle Paul; nevertheless, every sane man knows that St. Paul was right and "Poor Richard" wrong.

When we take a second step, from morals into the region of religion pure and simple, it is as well once and for all to recognize the fact that we have stepped into a place where scientific demonstration is not to be had. The religious sense is as imperative as the moral sense, where it speaks at all, and it gives no explanation of its commands. Men constantly make a mistake here. They stand at the threshold of religion, waiting and ready to be convinced. They think they have the right to demand arguments and reasons which will break down all their intellectual reluctance and compel them to accept certain doctrinal conclusions. Now, religious belief is not reached by arguments. Conviction does not lie at the end of a syllogism. It is quite true that any rational man should be able to "give a reason for the faith that is in him." But if there be any faith in him at all, it is there before the reasons for it have shaped themselves clearly in his mind. The really difficult thing in the way of entrance upon the religious life, and the pursuit of such a life, is that it is in sharp antagonism with the wisdom which is real wisdom in other things. We are so accustomed to walk by sight in those interests near to us, that the principle of faith seems untrustworthy. Under the stress of some strong emotion, or even of a passing impulse, one is ready to follow the lead of faith a little way; but he also, as it were, attempts to keep one hand on the rail of experi-

ence while he ventures one foot along the path of faith. He is reluctant to venture a foot so far that he cannot draw it back again in case it seems to lead him into difficulties.

The essential reason why the religious life can only be, in the nature of the case, a life by faith, is because it has to do directly with a person and not with a thing. If religion consisted in obedience to a code or set of regulations, it would be possible to formulate the code and examine it with minutest care before one adopts it at all. But religion, as we understand the term, positively refuses to stand upon any such ground. It is a relation of the individual soul to the individual God; and because it is, if it be anything at all, a relationship between persons, it possesses that same element of the unknown which always must exist in any relation between actual living persons.

Yet it is easy to see the unmistakable gain to anyone who does frankly adopt this principle of life. It gives him peace, for instance, in the presence of that most pressing fact of all human life, the fact of sin. When he is exhausted in the struggle against temptation and feels tempted to throw it all up, as not being worth the cost of the self-repression which it entails, the only reenforcement which can come to him is what, if you love the phrase, you may call "blind faith." It is blind; but in that it simply shares with all the fundamental emotions and impulses of men.

Besides that, it makes him easy in the presence of circumstances. One is entangled constantly by such a complication of apparently meaningless facts and forces that he is puzzled at times to know why he is here, why he came, what good is to come from it all, or where he is going. In such a mood the only thing upon which he can stay himself is the principle which St. Paul lays down. For under all the perplexities of life there is the subconscious feeling that, complicated as it all seems, there is a plan which is being slowly worked out and of which he forms a part. A workman is willing to labor and sweat in the heat of a summer sun, doing menial work for the erection of a house or church or a temple of justice. But he would not undergo the labor for a single day, if he did not have behind it all the unspoken and usually unthought conviction that there is, in the midst of all the confusion, an architect's plan which is slowly being realized.

The religious life is always an experiment. The first religious man, according to our way of thinking, of which there is any record, is Abraham, the "father of the faithful." He manifested his religion in the only way possible to him. "He went out, not knowing where he went," preferring that rather than to stay in the midst of a community which was beyond reformation and which offended his moral sense at every turn. The supreme instance is Christ, the

key to whose life is this same principle of faith that St. Paul lays down: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O Lord." It is an experiment. It is an experiment which is entered upon as birds begin their migration. It is not the actual presence of frost, or suffering from hunger, which induces the feathered citizens to flock together in mimic convention and take their flight to the South; it is because they are moved by a deep inward, universal unrest, which is itself a prophecy, and which realizes its prophecy in the warm, balmy climate of the South.

II.

BANISHING SIN.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—JOHN i. 29.

AN Egyptian king of the eighteenth dynasty issued a decree that Satan should be banished from the two Egypts. King Canute set his royal chair on the sand where the tide lipped, and issued his royal mandate that the water should not rise above the place where he struck his scepter. Jesus proposes to Himself the task of rolling back the tide of sin. Is this proposition intrinsically any more reasonable or worthy of sober consideration than either of the former ones?

I wish it clearly to be understood that, when in this I speak of sin, I mean sin. I do not mean misfortune, or misery, or penalty, or any evil consequence whatsoever—I mean sin; because it is from it that, not by any means all, but at the same time a very large proportion, of what men call evil, springs. What oppresses one when he seriously confronts the situation is the bulk, the accumulation, the potency of this mischievous thing which men call sin. It is so big. There is

so much of it. It so interpenetrates all human life. It lies in wait and strikes like a serpent. It goes up and down and springs upon those whom it would devour, like a lion. Itself and its results have been accumulating all through the ages. It is piled up in society. It is registered in the human soul and body. It is passed on by evil inheritance from father to child, to the third and fourth generation. It shows itself in persons. It dominates the political order. It poisons the social order—it is everywhere, in everything, in every person; like a miasma, poisoning the atmosphere that all men breathe; like a poison in the water that all men drink; like an evil tempter squat at the ear of Eve when she sleeps; soliciting Adam when he wakes. The feeling of the sober-minded man when he confronts it all is one of hopelessness. When he hears a human being affirm his own purity, or even his hope of ultimate sanctification, it is difficult to keep from regarding such a man as a fanatic. When he hears a reformer inveigh against the faults of the times, and paint a picture of the pure age that might be, it is hard to keep from regarding such a man as an impracticable visionary. In the presence of the actual facts, the sober-minded man is apt to settle back upon the conviction that the most that can be done is to secure decency, reasonable security of life and property, and cover all the rest as far as possible out of sight, not forgetting that it is,

but convinced that nothing is to be gained by either talking or thinking about it.

Now, in the face of all these facts and all these habits, comes the proposal of Jesus Christ; a proposal seriously made, to take away, that is, to root out, eradicate, abolish, obliterate, not the evils, but the sin of the world.

I wish to say here, in parenthesis, that what He proposes to deal with is not penalty, but sin. I have but a languid interest in the discussions, profound as they have been, of the way in which the Saviour makes atonement for men's guilt. I think the guilt will take care of itself in any case, where the sin is exterminated. The bottom fact is that the moral recovery of a sinner carries with it, of necessity, the taking away of his guilt. As to the penalty which such a sinner may bear, whether in this world or the next, if his sinfulness be actually cured, he will not regard such penalty as a misfortune.

Now, the first thing to be noticed, is that Jesus has in some strange way got Himself believed. There is no fundamental conviction more universal in Christendom, than that there is "a good time coming." I say a good time. Not a happy time; but a time when goodness shall cover the earth. It is noteworthy that the whole pagan world has its good time behind it. It looks backward to the golden age; Christianity looks forward. It does so because the Master has, in some strange way, been able to infuse His own

confidence in humanity's moral future. This hopefulness has taken strange and grotesque forms, to be sure. Men have dreamed of a millennium this year, or this century, or at some fixed time in the Christian centuries. They have portrayed a millennial period which would have but small attraction to the average man. But with it all there has been, and is, throughout the Christian peoples an irrefragable belief that sin will end.

I do not stop to ask by what means the Master has been able to infect Christendom with this new hope. But I ask, What are the means which He announces to bring it about? and what are the present indications of His success or failure? In a word, how does He propose to do it and how is He succeeding? The answer is found by looking at His definition of sin. A physician's cure depends upon his diagnosis. Jesus' diagnosis was something new. He declares that sin is a personal matter between a personal God and a personal soul. It is the breaking of a friendship; it is the loss of confidence; it is the cessation of intercourse. If the estranged friends could be brought together and the misunderstanding between them corrected, the rest will take care of itself. The first term of His religion is "our Father." Whoever says the Lord's Prayer with understanding breaks at once with the whole ethnic conception of sin. To that conception, sin is a broken statute; Jesus says it is

an outraged affection. Now, a broken statute can never be mended; a broken affection can be recemented, with difficulty, to be sure, but it can be done, and where it is fully done the broken place is likely to be stronger than any other portion of the fabric. He hopes, therefore, for the eradication of human sin by the slow, yet sure, developing of the consciousness in every man that he is a child of God, and that while he needs God, God, if possible, still more needs him. The Christian rests his hope of salvation not primarily in the fact that he will perish apart from God, but that God's affection must suffer forever until He "bring His children home again."

How is He succeeding? The reply is, look with open eyes at the world as it is to-day; with all its evils, its miseries, its misfortunes—in a word, with all its sin. Then close your eyes and open them again upon the same world three centuries ago, ten centuries ago, twenty centuries ago. Each view that one takes of humanity as a whole at these successive periods shows within it a slow but steady, unfaltering progress in all those things that make for human welfare, but pre-eminently above them all in that one thing upon which human welfare rests—that is, righteousness.

III.

CHRIST, HIS OWN MASTER.

"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast-day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them."—JOHN ii. 23.

HE did not commit Himself unto them. It would have been most unfortunate if He had; notwithstanding the fact that they believed on Him, and no doubt would have been willing to give Him loyal service. It is always a dangerous thing for one to commit himself to any set of men. No error has been more persistent in the history of Christianity than the notion that either certain particular creeds of Christians, or even the Christian Church as a whole, had come into a monopolistic possession of the Master. No Church, no creed, no confession of faith possesses Christ. To the extent that they are true He possesses them.

The feeling very widespread just now in the Christian world is that it is necessary to search for Christ within Christianity; that He has been overlaid, obscured, and in certain regards misrepresented by the institutions and confessions which profess to publish Him. No charge of

dishonesty or insincerity is brought or need be brought against the institutions. They are acting in perfect good faith, and this notwithstanding the Christian feeling of our time has decided to subject them all to a re-examination. The cry of the age is, "Back to Jesus." Last week the man died who in our time first raised this cry. The author of "Ecce Homo" set out upon the enterprise of going straight through the existing Christian beliefs and institutions to find the man Jesus Christ. No book has to the same extent colored the religious thought of the modern world. It has been followed at quite a late day by others springing from the same motive. "The Programme of Jesus," "Christianity According to Christ," "Christ and His Interpreters," "The Gospel and Its Interpreters," "The Great Discourse," and a hundred other volumes might be named, all addressed to the same end. They spring out of the diffused feeling that Christ has been lost in Christianity and must be sought for anew.

Now, not a few hotly deny the premises. They regard the whole movement as an abandonment of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." They look upon it as a modern craze which has in it much of irreverence, if not of blasphemy. The monk Ignatius rails at Dr. Gore and his associates in "Lux Mundi." Bishop McLaren advocates "Dogma as the Antidote of Doubt."

It does not much matter whether the reason assigned for the movement be valid or not; the movement itself is a fact to be taken account of.

Now, it is true that the Church has throughout its whole history been at least nominally organized around the person of Jesus. There never has been a time when it would have hesitated to assert that its purpose was to present Christ to humanity. But it is quite true, as a matter of history, that it has at certain times and places put something else before Him. For instance, the more enthusiastic Athanasians of the fourth century laid emphasis upon the doctrine of Christ, rather than on the person of Christ. A thousand years later the Knights of the Temple placed military glory before their real Master. The Society of Jesus did the like with the Papacy. Lutherans did the same thing with the doctrine of "justification by faith." The Calvinists did the same thing with a system. The Church of England did the same with its polity and liturgy. Modern times have added to all these a thousand other things, originally meant to be presentations of the Master, but which have accumulated to such an extent that the personality of Christ is thought to be concealed behind them. The current conception of the place and function of the Holy Scripture has tended to the same end. Instead of thinking of the Bible as being inspired by Christ, it has come to be generally thought of

as a book inspired from outside, whose purpose is to describe or present Him.

All these together have set the earnest-minded Christian people of our own day to the task of recovering Christ from the superincumbent mass of doctrine, poetry, polity, romance, and dogma which they believe to hide Him. It is this feeling which lies at the root of all historical criticism, all Biblical criticism, all Palestinian exploration, all the Lives of Christ.

Two questions then arise: First, is this attempt a legitimate one? Second, does it promise to be a successful one? Its legitimacy can only be established by experiment. There is no question of the fact that thousands of earnest-minded followers of Christ do not find themselves at home either in the Church or the dogmas of Christ. Of course, it is open to anyone to say that this is their fault or their misfortune. It may be so; but the fact remains the same. It is probably true, also, that this search for Christ may be simply a mistaken intellectual curiosity, which would not find any great value in Christ, even if it should discover Him by this method. But no one can question that a considerable number of men and women, to whom the name Christian cannot and ought not to be denied, are waiting with more or less hopefulness for the outcome of the investigation which is now proceeding. I think their attitude is not a right one, nor, indeed, an honorable one. It would be

better for them to join the Church and assist it in its search for truth; this would be better than to stand outside waiting to take and appropriate truth which has cost them nothing.

But things are as they are. I believe myself that this cry "Back to Jesus" is legitimate. I believe, also, that it will ultimately accrue to the untold benefit of the organized Church. It is not altogether an unprecedented thing. From time to time during the Christian centuries a similar mood has seized the Christian world, and the outcome of it has always been good. I think also that the outcome of this will be good. I think it has been good already. It will issue, as it seems to me, in a truer and more vivid conception of the personality of the Master. It will give truer and more wholesome notions about God. It will result, practically, in a better feeling toward all men, and especially toward them of the household of faith. It is true that the quest of the Holy Grail has not always found the precise thing it sought. But those who pricked forth with pure heart in such discovery have always been rewarded by finding some precious treasure.

IV.

THE USE OF PAIN.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—ROMANS viii. 22, 23.

THE Christian minister is constantly called upon to witness suffering. He has to see people in sickness, in pain, in distress. He has not the satisfaction which the physician possesses of being able to cure pain, or even to give an anodyne. The most that is within his power is to call upon certain resources within the person suffering as well as without; to recommend patience, stimulate hope, and strengthen the power of endurance. After he has done all this he usually leaves the house with a feeling of profound dissatisfaction. As he walks home he is apt to ask himself the meaning, use, and purpose of pain. He does not find the answer as readily forthcoming as is to be desired. He is not concerned with the problem of "the origin of evil." He is willing to leave that to the philosophers. But what presses upon him is that

feeling which comes to a religious man who believes in God and in God's goodness, and who sympathizes with his fellow-man, which compels him to ask what all this pain is for.

The thing that overwhelms him is its bulk; there is so much of it. There are pains of the body and pangs of the heart and distress of the soul. Then again, the evil effect of pain seems to be out of proportion to its magnitude. A twinge will spoil all physical surroundings. A vexation will take the zest out of the best planned day. A heartache will make the sunshine sickly. It is like some dark pigment with an infinite power of diffusion; a single drop of it in the water of one's life will discolor the whole contents. It is a thing with which religion is much concerned. The sufferer has a right to look to Christianity for something; indeed, it does turn to the Master with special hopefulness in this particular regard. It turns to Him as to a man "acquainted with grief." He is supposed to be familiar with it, and therefore to have something to say.

Before listening, however, to what He has to say, it may be well to ask what the world has been able to say without Him. First, then, one can see the inevitableness of pain. It is the price which must be paid for the capacity to enjoy. As there can be no light without corresponding shadow, the very conception of pleasure is impossible without the idea of pain in the

background. It is the necessary condition of the capacity to feel. Everyone can see that just as delicacy and sensibility increases, so the capacity to suffer increases.

In the second place, anyone can see that it is not the penalty of sin, and that in large part it is not even the consequence of sin. Pain would have been one of the facts of life whether Adam had eaten the apple or not, even if there had been no apple or no Adam. It is rooted in the nature of things. It is quite true that a very considerable amount of it can be directly traced to sin; but relatively this portion of it is small. The Old Testament idea that it is portioned out to men in proportion to their wrong-doing is an idea that was practically abandoned long before our Lord gave it its death-blow. "Those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were not sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem."

In the third place, we can see that it is the schoolmaster of love. When one seriously attempts to imagine a world in which no pain is, he is compelled to see a world in which no love is. There would be no place in such a world for any kindly interchange of sympathy, and where no sympathy is possible no affection is possible. Charity, patience, tenderness, fortitude would be words without a meaning in such a world.

Now, all this is very valuable. It is the sum of all the wisdom upon the subject from Job to Mr.

Spencer. But the practical efficiency of it is only to enable one to bear his neighbor's pain with equanimity. The most serene philosopher of this sort will always find his philosophy put to rout by so little as a toothache.

The ministry of consolation must have something better to say. What is the Master's word on the question? First, it is that suffering is an inevitable necessity both for God and for man. Nothing could be more unreasonable or untrue than the popular notion that God is "without passions." That statement could only be made truthfully of Brahm, not of God. "It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven." The father sitting at home and following the prodigal with his eye, must needs bear an aching heart. God does not "willingly afflict or grieve the children of men." Jesus, by thus binding up God and man together, in a community of pain, binds them together in a community of sympathy. For when men in suffering come fairly to see that they are enduring the experience of God Himself, they find the moral sting taken out of their torture, and are to that extent the better able to bear it.

Second, it is His revelation that it is the outcome of God's good purpose for His family, and is, therefore, not distributed according to personal dessert. His teaching is, that it is laid upon each one in such way as is best, upon the whole, for the good of all. But He has a large outlook.

It is quite natural that the one upon whom the burden is laid should groan under it, fret under it, and maybe rebel under it. It does not greatly matter. If a soldier in an army is told off for a painful duty, he is not, as a rule, told what his duty is for. It is simply his business to do the duty and to suffer whatever it may involve. There are large plans concerned, and if it be necessary to sacrifice him for the attainment of the plans, sacrificed he must be; and that is the best use to which he can be put. Hence pain is in large part vicarious. It is vicarious, even when the subject of it is not aware that he is suffering for others, and quite likely has no heart to endure such sufferings for them. The truth is, if there were no good things done by men in this world except the things which they themselves choose to do, there would be far less of them done than there actually are. But in the wisdom, as well as in the goodness of God, men are made to serve His ultimate purposes in spite of themselves. It all resolves itself into the doctrine of the Cross.

Jesus' conception is, in a word, that God deals with us as we deal with our children. We allow the child to burn his fingers that he may discover the nature and property of fire, and so may not burn his whole body. We take away his treasures sometimes, even though he screams. We bathe him in spite of all his protests. If necessary, we lay upon one child a burden or a

painful duty, which is not particularly to his benefit, but which is for the good of the household. Jesus regards us as children in a household, and around us He declares to be the everlasting arms of His Father.

V.

THE MARKET VALUE OF A SOUL.

"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—MATTHEW xvi. 26.

THERE are, in fact, only two ideals of living. The one is to attain secure possession of all those good things which the senses take account of, and which the understanding can weigh and measure. They are such things as health, wealth, leisure, luxury—in a word, a comfortable life in general. The other ideal is to postpone, or at least to subordinate, these things to the purpose of securing that inward peace and sense of satisfaction, which comes from a right adjustment of one's life to God without and within one. In a word, this is what the Scripture calls "eternal life." I think that a peculiar quality of our present time is the outspoken frankness with which men accept the first of these ideals and declare that it is sufficient for them. Time was when everybody felt bound to speak with profound consideration of the other ideal, whether he chose it for himself or not. But that seems, to some extent, to have passed away, and it is openly avowed by not a few, that this life is best administered when it is least distracted by any

considerations drawn from any other possible life. To put it plainly, they have made up their mind to secure the world in part or in whole, and to let the soul take care of itself. There is some justification for this, for it really does seem with each generation to become more possible to actually secure such a grip upon the good things of life that one can say with some certainty to his soul: "Eat, drink, and be merry; for I have laid up for thee much goods for many days." If you follow, then, these two ideals to their conclusion, the ultimate alternative which presents itself to every man is, Will he seek the world, or will he look out for his soul? The striking thing about Jesus' word on this point is that He raises these alternatives to their highest terms. As mathematicians would say, He contrasts two modes of life, raising each to the *n*th power.

Let us look at these two modes, then, for a little. He puts it in the form of a commercial question: Will it profit a man if he gain even the whole world and pay the price of it with his soul? It might, indeed, seem to be a fairly good bargain, for few people realize what extraordinary power of gratification the world actually possesses. In order to see it more clearly, suppose we take that thing which really does stand for it in actual use—money. Few people realize what money can buy. Of course it can buy ease and physical comfort; that goes without saying, and I waste no time upon it. But it can buy

much higher things. It can buy intellectual development. It can give the opportunity to acquire high and noble tastes. It can give leisure for research. It can make the mind greater. And it can do far more than that; It can buy length of days. Who can estimate how many lives come untimely to an end because their possessors are not able to procure for themselves either that costly medical and surgical skill, or that opportunity for change of climate and scenery which would prolong their lives? With money they can live; without money, they die. And it can do even more than this; It can buy love. There is an old proverb that "when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window." Anyone who has seen much of the inside of the households of the poor must have been saddened by a certain hardness, and lack of affectionate expression which is not allowed opportunity, in consequence of the absorption of their lives in the hard struggle for existence. Wealth, then, can buy love; not directly, but indirectly, by securing to human beings that atmosphere and surrounding in which so delicate a plant as human love alone can blossom and bear fruit to perfection.

Now, one would think that to whatever extent he secures and guarantees to himself the world, he guarantees, to that extent, his own well-being. And if he should be able to secure the absolute possession of all that the world can give,

he would have guaranteed himself against practically all disasters—except the final one of dying, which is inevitable in any case. Jesus does not deny this. He does not deny the possibility of attaining practically unlimited worldly good. Nor does he doubt its legitimacy. But he calls attention to a very grave peril which attends upon this ideal of life.

The peril is that of "losing one's soul." It may be well to stop for a moment to say that by the soul is meant, roughly speaking, that quality or faculty in man which apprehends God and goodness. Jesus' strange assumption is that this faculty may be lost. He uses the word in the same way that we use it when we speak of a man losing his reason or losing his temper or losing his memory. It is not the result of a judicial condemnation that he has before him at all; it is the actual fact of the disappearance of a faculty. I know that there is a notion current that "losing one's soul" is an expression equivalent to being damned. It is nothing of the sort. It is a biological process that is referred to, and not a judicial one. Everybody is familiar with the operation of this process in the individual faculties of the soul. One knows perfectly what it is to have an affection gradually wane and vanish; to have an accomplishment, which he had gained at great pains, little by little disappear for want of practice; to have any mental or emotional capacity die out for want of use.

What Jesus, then, has in mind is that the soul, which is the sum total of all the higher faculties, has in it this terrible possibility of gradually dying out and disappearing. You will see at once that this awful catastrophe needs no machinery of damnation. It is automatic. It works of itself and it goes to its own end.

There are not a few people who seem to be dimly conscious of the fact that they are losing something, but they do not quite know what it is. I have heard men and women again and again deplore their incapacity to understand or sympathize with religious things. They are very apt to attribute this to what they call the "difficulties of faith," such as miracles, an unnatural and stilted mode of life, or what not. Sometimes, no doubt, that is the true explanation, but I cannot avoid believing that in many cases the explanation is that they have already begun to lose their spiritual faculties. The process of losing their souls is already well under way.

This, then, being the situation, how is it possible for one to "save" his soul? or to regain it if it be partly lost, or damaged? Right at this point, in theory, at least, comes in the place and function of the Church. It is meant to be a spiritual gymnasium, or a well conducted house within which all the inmates carry forward their lives upon sane and wholesome methods of food and exercise. It does not always, by any means,

fulfill this ideal. It is speaking within the truth, however, to say that it fulfills it better than any other institution that I am aware of fulfills its purpose. It comes more nearly doing its work than the State does in securing justice, or than social arrangements do in securing equity.

Jesus, then, does not create the facts with which he deals; He only calls attention to them. That, indeed, is sufficient; for whenever one gets fairly before his mind what the actual facts of the case are, Jesus rests serenely in the conviction that such a man will act as He would have him act.

Of course there is another method of dealing with this whole subject which many practically attempt: that is, to secure, if possible, both worlds—either one at a time, or one after the other. This process, however, has never been found to be satisfactory, either by the persons who try it or by the keen observers who watch them attempt it. It is impossible in the nature of the case, for existence everywhere, and always, depends upon character, and character ultimately depends upon choice. Only those will live and go on living who are capable of life; and if the faculties of the soul one by one disappear, that is the end. There is nothing then left to live for. The goal to be striven for by each individual is to so live

> "That your life be not destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God doth make his pile complete."

VI.

BEARING OTHER PEOPLE'S BURDENS.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."—GALATIANS vi. 2.

I WISH to speak a little about the Christian law as to the use of wealth. I do not speak either to the rich or the poor. The truth is there is no such distinction; and one of the worst possible things is for people to get the idea that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. The law is the same, whether a man has an income of a million or an income of a hundred dollars. The question is, how should the consistent Christian use his wealth, be it great or small, in the presence of the fact that there are always other people who need it worse than he does? I take it for granted that I speak to Christian people—that is to say, to those who really wish to know what their duty is in a perplexing matter, with the intent to do it as best they may.

Now, in the Old Testament the law was very simple. It said, in effect, that a man might accumulate all the wealth he pleased and hold it for his own, without reference to anybody else,

provided he first paid out of it a tithe of one-tenth. All the rest of it was his own. Neither the state nor the Church nor the poor had any moral claim upon it whatsoever. A few foolish persons advocate the restoration within the Christian Church of the "tithe system." They forget, however, that it was a mechanical device which cannot possibly operate within the free institutions of Christianity. It was abolished with the rest of the system of which it formed a part. And besides that it was inherently unjust. Ten per cent. of the income of a family which has a thousand dollars a year is a very much greater thing than ten per cent. of the income of a family which has a hundred thousand a year. The first, if it gives it, must give it out of necessities; the second can give it out of superfluity.

But what rule or law, if any, has taken its place? Is it left for the Christian to do as he pleases in the matter? I reply, it is left to him to do as he pleases. But Christianity gives him a few very simple, but very profound, principles which are expected to show him what he ought to please to do. The difficulty is this: The Christian man or woman, especially the one who has a comfortable income, wishes to do what is right, in order that, having done so, he or she may enjoy the remainder of their income without the haunting sense that somebody else begrudges it to them, or that they are possibly retaining for their own use something which in the sight

of God belongs to others. They ask, and they have a right to ask, by what means they can be free to enjoy themselves with a whole heart and with a good conscience. What must they first do to purchase for themselves this right?

The difficulties are very great. In the first place, the necessity of the human race is so bitter. There are so many poor, and they are so very poor, that the mere sight of the magnitude of the necessity which ought to be relieved is very likely to fill each individual with despair. He says to himself in fact: "I will not try to do anything, because, let me do the best I possibly can, it will have no more effect, practically, in lessening the sum total of misery than it would lessen the bulk of the Atlantic if I should dip a pailful from it, or change the Great Desert into a garden if I should pour a cup of water upon a corner of it."

Besides that, men who are at once charitable and clear-sighted are oppressed at the inefficiency of alms-giving as it is. There are more than six hundred charitable institutions in this city. They are being increased in number and extent every day. Over and above these voluntary ones, the State itself professes to relieve all actual necessity. In spite of them all, however, one cannot see that there are any fewer persons suffering, or that in the main they suffer less than they would if all these were abolished. I do not say that this is true, but it is an impression

which is almost inevitably created by what one sees. Then, again, poverty is so entangled with vice. No one would intimate, of course, that one is vicious because one is poor, but the converse is very likely to be true, that he is poor because either he or somebody else is or has been vicious.

Once more, it is so difficult for one, however conscientious he may be, to distinguish between what are necessities and what are luxuries for himself. I suppose that there is nothing absolutely necessary except bread and shelter and enough clothing to keep one warm. Theoretically necessity ends with this. But the ordinary man thinks his butter as equally necessary as his bread, and the woman regards the ornament of her dress as being as much of a necessity as the dress itself. And so on. There is really no place where one can say that necessity ends and luxury begins.

These are the difficulties in the way. They confuse the understanding; they benumb the conscience. Has the Master anything to say in the premises?

It would seem that He has. In the first place, there is a kind of wealth which the Christian may not own at all. He does not pass upon the rightness or the wrongness of anybody else's owning it; he simply says it is not lawful for him to own. In Old Testament times a devout Hebrew might not put into the Temple treasury

the reward of blood, nor the price of a dog, nor the hire of a harlot. These were, of course, arbitrary enactments; but the spirit which underlay them passed on into Christianity. The rule which subsisted in the Temple statutes is now written in the Christian conscience. It is right here that Christianity and conventional morality part company. There are some avocations that a Christian may not engage in. We need not name them; they will suggest themselves at once. With these, as a rule, there is not much difficulty; those who do engage in them usually stand aloof from the Christian Church. But what shall one do if he is a member or an employee of a firm, or house, or corporation which habitually violates the law of God? His share in such violation is infinitesimal. He may be a small stockholder, having one share out of a million in a corporation which seduces the State, tramples upon the rights of a municipality, grinds the faces of the poor, corrupts justice, and debauches the moral sense. Shall he take his dividend? Shall he remain in its employ and take his annual salary or his daily wage? The answer is clear. He may not do so and still remain a Christian.

I know the reply perfectly well. The stockholder says: "I cannot choose. I must invest to secure an income; I must trust my investment to the management; I have no influence with the management. What shall I do?" The laborer

says: "If I throw up my position I will starve. I could do that possibly; but my wife and children will starve. What shall I do?" The answer again, however hard it may be, is perfectly plain. If the money when it comes into the corporation treasury has sweat upon it, or tears, or blood, or comes loaded with curses, all these stick to it and go with it into the pockets and into the souls of all those who receive it. The answer of Christ is: "It is not lawful."

The principle of the text goes to the root of the thing. "Bear ye one another's burdens," the injunction is; not relieve the burdens or destroy them. That cannot be done. The injunction is, share them. Bear about with you the world's misery and poverty and wretchedness; bear it with you at your table, at your fireside, at your amusement, at your work. But you ask, "Why should I carry about such a death's head and bloody bones, to take all the zest out of living?" I answer, It is Christ's method of saving you from selfish sin. It is His method of guiding you into right and wholesome ways; of relieving the necessities of your fellowmen; in a word it is fulfilling—that is, filling full—the law of Christ. Where this deep human sympathy is present in one as a motive, the specific things to be done will become clear in each case as it arises.

VII.

SHAMEFUL IGNORANCE.

"Some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."—1 CORINTHIANS XV. 34.

WHETHER it be a thing to be ashamed of or not, there are certainly a great many people who do not "know God." In some cases the idea is entirely absent; in others it is present, but it is formless, vague, indefinite, and to all practical purposes valueless. In the case of still other persons they did once have a knowledge of God, or they thought they had—which is much the same thing. They possessed at one time an inherited set of notions about God; but as they have grown older they have taken the trouble to examine with some care the notions which they received when they were children, have come to the conclusion that they were not tenable, and have thrown them away. But they have not put anything in their place. Those apartments in their nature which were once occupied by what they thought to be God, they have found were occupied by images, and they have either broken the images and thrown them out of doors, or they have permanently closed those rooms and do not enter them.

All this class of persons are impatient at the confident tone which is assumed by the Church and by religious teachers generally. They do not honestly believe that as much certitude is possible as seems to be implied rather in the tone than in the matter of teachers of religion. Now, is there anything morally blameworthy in such an attitude as this? Is there anything in it to be ashamed of? Many persons are really surprised at the suggestion, and not a few habitually think that exactly the opposite is true. The very young man is inclined to think that doubt or hesitancy in religious matters is rather a thing to pique himself upon than to be ashamed of. The avowed liberal never ceases to call attention to the superior moral dignity of his attitude as contrasted with those who are, as he says, bound in the ligatures of dogma.

All this makes it worth while to ask what St. Paul meant, and whether what he meant was true, when he said that ignorance of the things of God is a shameful thing. Everybody will agree that it is not only shameful, but criminal, if it be an ignorance which can be corrected. Nothing will save it, and nothing ought to save it from all the opprobrium that can be thrown upon it, except the proof that this is a place where knowledge is impossible, and that therefore lack of knowledge cannot be a dishonorable thing. In other departments of life nothing is more contemptible than willful ignorance. From the point

of view of science, the unpardonable thing is to refuse to know what is knowable. In the business world all men will agree that uncertainty or hesitancy is one of the direst of all evils. Better to know what the facts are, however bad they may be, than to be in doubt. Uncertainty ruins business. One will pardon almost anything in the navigator of a ship easier than hesitancy. He may be ignorant, rough, boorish; he may be anything that is bad; but the one thing which the passengers insist upon is that he must have a perfectly clear notion of where he is going and how he is going to get there. The most contemptible thing in the world is a man or woman who doubts husband or wife. Doubt in such a relation is a shameful thing, for it is a relation in which doubt ought not to be allowed to have any place. If there should be any ground for the suspicion of evil on either side, it becomes at once a discreditable thing for either to rest for a moment until the doubt be settled. Certitude, either for good or for evil, is the only thing in which an honorable man or a virtuous woman can rest. It all sums itself up, then, in this, that hesitation in any matter of profound moment is only pardonable after every effort has been made to find the truth and has failed. But the lurking feeling is that precisely this is the case in religion; that certitude is impracticable and that, so long as this remains true, hesitation, however unfortunate it may be, or to what-

ever disaster it may lead, is not intrinsically shameful.

Let us examine this feeling a little. We who call ourselves Christians, for instance, are persuaded that God is a fact and a person; that that fact and person is manifested to us in Jesus Christ; that our destiny, and in some way the destiny of all men, is bound up with their relation to this manifestation of God. Now, is anything better possible for men than a doubtful feeling toward all these propositions? "Doubt crossed by faith or faith crossed by doubt," alternating between these two, is anything better really attainable? Whether anything more certain be possible or not, it is clear that men have always sought for certitude and will go on seeking for it to the end of the chapter. "Master, show us a sign," said one class who looked at Him; "Cast thyself down from the temple," said the devil; "Come down from the cross and we will believe," said the Jews; "Lord now speakest Thou plainly, now we know," said a set of His disciples. All through the ages men have sought to find assurance from texts, from signs, from stigmata; by means of prayer gauges, faith cures, and all sorts of similar means to remove this question from uncertainty to certainty.

Why do these means all fail, and the doubtfulness still remain? In general the answer is easy to give. It is because God corresponds to the moral side of consciousness, and not to the intel-

lectual side. It is possible, and always has been, for the philosopher to be ignorant of God, and for the artisan or the little child to be certain about Him. It is not by thinking rightly, but by living rightly, that one comes to understand that complex religious truth which St. Paul calls "the knowledge of God." It would be exasperating, if it were not so pitiful, to see the reiterated attempts and reiterated failures of so many to secure religious certainty. Some of the brightest men and women seem to spend most of their time in arguing, questioning, discussing about religion. They are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They do not for a moment suspect the reason why, but anyone who looks at them calmly from the outside can see plainly what the difficulty in their way is. They fancy that the knowledge of God is reached by intellectual processes; the observer knows that it is attained by moral processes. These persons are setting about it the wrong way. They fail, and their failure is shameful because it is avoidable. This, according to the teaching of Christ and of the New Testament generally, is the ground upon which St. Paul pours contempt upon religious doubtfulness. It is because, as he declares, it is within the power of any human being to attain to a practical working certitude if he uses the proper method. "He that doeth My will shall know of My doctrine." This process cannot be

reversed. It is idle for one to think that he may stand neutral until he has discovered what the doctrine is before he undertakes to put it in practice. "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."

VIII.

RELIGION AND BUSINESS.

"Be not slothful in business; be diligent in spirit, serving the Lord.—Romans xii. 11.

That is precisely the difficulty. Is it possible for one to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, without neglecting his business? We live in a commercial age. The most laborious master in our day is business. It is taken for granted that everything else must bend or yield or give place or get out of the way before business stress. It is thought of by many thousands of men as being, in fact, the only real thing. All other things are sentimental; good in their way, but not the prime thing. But "business is business," and all else must give place. Of course there is a good side to this. This intense practicalness is the characteristic of that race which has become dominant in the earth. It has been able to dominate because it has been able to pursue a business steadfastly. Nothing would be more futile than to inveigh against the spirit of any age. It is too strong to be turned backward; and, in the long run, it works its purpose and does God's will. But the commercial spirit of our age and country carries with it very serious

perils. I call your attention briefly to some of these.

It is lamented by many that romance has taken its departure from actual life; that art does not flourish; that we have no great paintings or statues or buildings—for the alleged reason that men are too busy to look at them, and because they value their money for commercial purposes so highly that they are not willing to spend it upon art. It is said, and we fancy with some truth, that the philosophical lawyer is disappearing and the man of business is taking his place; that the erudite physician is becoming scarce, and the practitioner is taking his place; that the skilled artisan, who made an art of his craft, has been supplanted by a "base mechanical," who can only do some portion of a trade, and has neither pleasure nor pride in it. It is pointed out that the charm of woman is disappearing. She expresses herself in business-like habits and tailor-made garments, thus unwittingly giving in her adhesion to the business-like spirit of the age. It is said that men's gallantry is disappearing, because men are too busy to be polite and women are growing too practical to care whether they are or not. I do not affirm that these opinions are true. It looks as though they were to a considerable extent, at any rate. Even if they are not absolutely true, they mark tendencies which it is well to consider.

Take the case of the average young man. His education has taken a utilitarian cast from the time he began to learn his alphabet. His parents throughout his whole training have thought of those things which will enable him to earn a livelihood. All through his youth the pressure of a practical education has left him little time to think of the higher things in life. Or the average woman; her multiform education has tended toward practical ends; her society duties are most exacting; her wife's and mother's obligations are superadded to these. She wakes every morning confronted with a mountain of business to be reduced, and goes to bed at night often too tired to say her prayers. Nothing is more pathetic than her attempt later in life to attain culture or improve her mind, after she has lost even the capacity to even sit still. We do not speak of the soft and delicate woman of luxury who has become so supersensitive that the crumpled rose leaf in her couch tortures her, or of the inane gilded youth who "grins like a dog and runneth about the city," but of ordinary wholesome-minded men and women.

The same difficulty confronts every family—how to make a place in the household routine for grace before meat, for family prayers, for instruction in religion. The same thing is the standing obstacle in the way of good government. The people of this city, or any other in America, are perfectly able to provide for themselves the best

government in the world. They assign a thousand reasons for not doing so. They rail at politicians and devise ballot-reform schemes to make men honest automatically. They miss the real explanation; they are too busy. They have not time to devote that attention and care to the administration of government without which men have been and always will be badly ruled.

Of course, I have in mind what seems to me, at any rate, to be much higher things than art, or leisure, or culture, or good government. I have in mind those things which are catalogued under the general title of "religion." I mean that thought of God and eternal life and the judgment and the attuning of the spirit to the eternal realities by which the spirit secures content.

Complaint is often made, from the pulpit, that men's faith is slipping away from them. The reasons assigned are the increase of knowledge, the attainments in the physical sciences, the difficulties in the way of accepting certain dogmas. No doubt all these are true in a way, but the real reason in most cases lies much nearer at hand and is much more difficult to deal with. Men are losing their faith, if they are losing it, in the same way that a king of old lost his valuable prisoner, and for which loss he was sternly rebuked by the prophet of God: "Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold,

a man turned aside, and brought a prisoner unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." If faith be gone it is because it has slipped away while men were "busy here and there."

It all comes back, in a word, to the question of the relative values of things. If money and the things that money can buy are deemed by any person to be actually of more value than the things which belong to the cultivation of his soul, then to business he will address himself. He will not be slothful, but diligent enough in all conscience. But he will have to pay the price for it, and that is the sacrifice of the things belonging to the spirit. I am quite aware of the difficulty of this whole way of looking at things. It is indeed very difficult for the average man to seriously believe that his soul is of as much value as his body, or that "the life" is really "more than the raiment." It always has been difficult to take seriously this dictum of Christ. But in their heart of hearts His hearers knew that what He said was true. The veriest money-grubber knows that it is true now. Jesus does not ask men to throw up their business and become street preachers or barefooted monks. He did prescribe this to one young man, it is true, but it is quite clear that in his particular case it was the only prescription which was indi-

cated by the symptoms. But men are made to be at home at the same time in two worlds, the world of things and the world of thoughts. The counsel of the apostle is, therefore, sound sense as well as divine wisdom. It may be paraphrased, "Be diligent in business and at the same time fervent in religion, thus serving man and God."

IX.

THE MEANING OF LENT.

"Brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—ROMANS viii. 12-13.

JUST now a large portion of the Christian world is "keeping Lent." Theoretically they are "weeping, fasting, and praying." Of course, it may be confessed that in the case of multitudes, it is not much more than a theory. Their austerities are not very severe, nor will their groans disturb their neighbors. But even so, a custom which has sufficient force to command even hypocritical observance must rest upon some reality. Probably few realize upon what a scale this Lent-keeping custom prevails. There are probably several millions of adult men and women whose whole manner of life for the six weeks current will be markedly different from what it has been throughout the year. Nor will they be at all the persons whom candid men would pronounce to be in special need to modify their way of living. They are the best people in the world through all the weeks of the year; but now they pass inward still farther to the

holy places of life. They fast, pray, give alms, meditate.

Outside this inner circle there is a far larger one composed of several hundred millions of people who keep Lent more or less. Rather more attention is given by them to prayers and alms and self-repression than ordinarily. The spirit of the season touches them without controlling them, just as the spirit of Christmas touches multitudes.

Now, so extensive, so sustained, so enduring a phenomenon must rest upon some real basis. It is foolish to wave it off in airy fashion as "a survival of paganism, or certainly of Judaism." There are "survivals" in every organism, but those organs which have outlasted their function do not dominate the body's action in this fashion. We may be quite sure that the custom survives because it fills some necessity. All the gibes of the society journals about "fashionable sackcloth" are beside the mark. They cannot be more trenchant than the words of the Master: If anyone "fasteth so as to appear unto men in fast," he is dismissed as a hypocrite in advance. But such people are not common in actual life, and when they do appear it is rather through weakness of head than through badness of heart that they err.

What, then, do Christian people mean by their Lenten discipline, assuming that they are honest in entering upon it? It springs from a fact

which any man can know, and which every "religious" man does know, to be true. That is that each man's inner and essential self is solicited in opposite directions by two rival attractions. They are the "flesh" and the "spirit." Of course, these words are not terms of scientific precision. But people know sufficiently well what they mean. The "flesh" is a comprehensive word for all those facts and forces which the senses take account of. The "spirit" may stand for those higher and deeper but less insistent facts and forces with which the soul deals directly. These two sides of life clamor constantly for the right to dominate the ego. But everybody knows that the solicitations of the flesh draw more powerfully than those of the spirit. Pleasure is pleasant right now; while goodness only promises to become pleasant by and by. The flesh pays cash; the spirit waits upon time. It is about impossible for many to believe that business or professional success, bringing with it leisure, luxury, power, and self-satisfaction, is not really the best thing possible for the ordinary man. It is a good thing; but it may come too high. Not a few men have paid for it all with their souls. They have no souls now. They have assassinated them because they disturbed their owners' peace. They "lived to the flesh" and have died. They still live, to be sure—that is, they have not yet learned that they are dead.

It is only in our generation that men are beginning to see how closely bound together are the flesh and the spirit, the soul and the body. For many an age they were thought of as two pilgrims, loosely attached, who should journey together a little way and then separate, each regardless of the other's destiny. We see better now the *nexus*. Morals has a physical basis, and the spirit is a flower whose roots are in the flesh.

"Living to the flesh" is not living grossly. The most unspiritual man may even be the most fastidious. It is simply a life so conducted that the soul is neglected. It gets no chance. In Lent the Christian world resolves more or less strenuously to redress the balance of life as far as may be. It would "bring the body under." Not humiliate it or revile it, but relegate it to its proper place. He who would get good from the season will take it as an opportunity for a deliberate, sustained attempt at self-mastery. He approaches the unseen through the medium of the tangible. It is a fight for life and death. But it is the contest of the long ages, entered upon by the first man who had gained moral insight enough to discern the monition of God from the flavor of a fruit; carried to its ultimate issue when the Son of Man fought it out in his own soul in the desert; facing every son of man with the inevitable alternative,

"If ye live to the flesh ye shall die; if through the Spirit ye mortify the flesh, ye shall live."

X.

WHO HAS A DEVIL?

"Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou . . . hast a devil?"—JOHN viii. 48.

THE Jews, on the occasion of which our text is part of the account, were thrown into a fever of rage by some quiet words of our Lord. They stormed and raved and called Him names, and finally accused Him of the very thing which was the matter with themselves—they said He had a devil. The truth was a devil had them.

The lesson is, a bad mind sees bad things. It makes a bad element to live in. The habit we have of projecting ourselves upon the world outside us is most marvelous. What is the reason that sometimes of an evening, after a day's work and worry, we feel so utterly hopeless? We look about over our business or our household, and everything seems going to the dogs. Our plans seem sure to fail, and the path seems absolutely closed before us. But we go to sleep in the midst of it and when we wake up all is changed. What is the reason? Has any change taken place in the face of the world while we slept? Not at all, but we look at the world through

other eyes. The truth is, we make our world to a great extent. Two great factors make up the total of every human life—one's self and the rest of the world. The world outside is but the reflection of the world inside each one of us. We are compelled to go inside of our own experience to get terms to describe what goes on outside. This is true more particularly concerning moral things. The wicked man is not sane. Not that he is insane, but unsane. His nature is not acting in obedience to the laws which ought to regulate it. It is out of joint. It is a distempered nature and can only see distemper in the world around it. Even the sun is smoky seen through a smoked glass. So we are all our lives meeting bitter, painful, vexatious things because we are out of gear ourselves. It is a law of nature that things really good become not only an annoyance, but positive pain, if the organ to which they appeal is out of order. If one is sickish, food makes him worse. If one has sore eyes, light hurts them. In this way selfishness and sin make the whole soul a diseased receiving organ, and therefore things which are really for its good hurt and worry it. The wise and good law of God becomes a burden to it. Christ Himself becomes hateful. Truth becomes distasteful; good and pure people are a disturbance.

The most abused Man who ever walked this earth of ours was the most perfect Man that ever was in it, and He was abused because He was

perfect. Jesus Christ was accused of more crimes and worse ones than ever man committed in the world. He not only "had a devil," in the language of His slanderers, but He was Himself in league with the Prince of Devils and did wonders by his aid! Every act He did was carped at and misinterpreted. When He talked to the people about their duty to their God, He was abused for trying to incite rebellion against Cæsar. When He told the great truth for men's comfort, that God and man had met in His person, He was accused of blasphemy. When He went to His friends' houses to eat at their tables He was called a glutton. When He drank wine like other folk, He was called a drunkard. When they would not endure His presence among them any longer, they took Him up onto a hill outside the city and nailed Him on a cross.

It is a sad commentary upon nature that we like bad people more than good ones. They are so much more entertaining! What is the reason we never allow any man perfect credit for purity of motive? Did you ever hear a person's character much praised in company, without feeling a sort of hankering to say something on the other side of the question? It is as hard for some to keep from besmirching a fair character, as for a schoolboy to resist throwing stones through the windows of an empty house. Good people so often stir up the evil that is in us, and

then we attribute to them the character which we ourselves possess.

There is a kind of person we see often—the passionate, ill-natured man—the man who is always living in a tempest. He is always wronged. Someone is eternally imposing upon him. To believe his story one would think him the most abused mortal upon the face of the earth. It never strikes him that the enemy he possesses is in his own bosom—a restless, uneasy, discontented mind. He does not know that to be ill-natured is just the same thing as to be ill-treated.

Then the actual wrongs of this world are so often blamed upon somebody else by the ones who do them. Did you ever hear of a filthy debauchee who had not at his tongue's end some silly story about his having been deceived once, and so determining to take revenge upon all for the wrong done him by one? Did you ever know an habitual drunkard who did not have somebody else to lay the blame of his sin upon? The poor victim of drink—was he not disinherited by his father? Wasn't he driven to desperation by the slanders of his enemies? Was he not overtaken by misfortune and his credit ruined? Wasn't he married to a wife who was a perpetual thorn in his side? Isn't it always that somebody else is to blame for it, and never that he goes and gets drunk because he likes it? Everybody has a devil except the one who has it himself.

So human nature in its bad estate everywhere. We never know that we have a devil ourselves, but always imagine that other people are possessed.

Now, the lesson of all this is, that as so much of misery comes from an evil mind within, so the cure of it can only be looked for from a change in our temper and spirit. To be saved from sin we must be "renewed in the inner man by the power of the Spirit of God." It is not any change of condition, or place, or circumstances we want, but a change of disposition. Notice what Christ offers to the world, not any improvement in outward circumstances, but rest, peace, cooling the fevered soul in its sickness, purging the jaundiced eyes of the distorting pigment, making life sweet and pleasant because it is clean.

XI.

FAMILY RELIGION.

"He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."—Luke ii. 51, 52.

It is a little startling to have it plainly intimated that Jesus came to be what He was, partly through the way in which He was reared. Clearly in the text His growth in wisdom and goodness is connected with the discipline of Joseph and Mary.

The supreme moment in the life of man or woman is when they hold in their arms their first-born child. Its soft fingers unlock chambers in their souls whose very existence they had been ignorant of. It educates them much and rapidly before they begin to educate it. But they must begin. And the religious life of the child will be very much what the religion of the father's family will make it. As things are among us, the chances are good that the ordinary child will have his growth in wisdom and in stature looked after. His schools will be selected with the best skill available, and he will be kept at his books. If anything threatens his physical welfare a physician will be called in. Food,

teaching, exercise, medicine—all these things the average child finds at his disposal. Indeed, there is a growing disposition not only to provide them for him, but to see that he is compelled to take them.

But what about that ingredient in his life which will lead him "into favor with God and man"? To whom shall he look for that? To chance? To a random impression which may be made upon him late in life? No! The place from where he has a right to expect religious guidance is from his father's house. If his father be either unable, unwilling, or unfit to furnish this, he has no business to have either house or child.

The one thing which is needed in this country above all else, is the religion of the family—not the religion of the individual or of the Church, but of the household. It is in grave peril of being lost from that place where it pre-eminently belongs. One large portion of the religious element of the community assumes without much thought that religion is a personal matter solely; that it approaches the adult individual, man or woman. Another portion assigns it its home almost exclusively in the Church; it segregates an area of beliefs, practices, and ceremonials, and calls these religion. So they are. But still the institute of religion is the family. If Christianity brings nothing to any man save to loosen in him his sense of being the priest of his own household, it may well be asked whether he had

not better have remained in paganism. Family prayers, grace before meat, the teaching of the catechism—these lie far closer to the root of individual righteousness and of public purity than is often realized.

We fear they have almost entirely disappeared. Many things have co-operated to cause their abandonment. The settlement of this country has been so much by isolated individuals that family religion has been in many instances impracticable for so long that the idea of it has been lost. Again, the restlessness which causes the so frequent change of house and home is apt to break up so much of the spirit of family worship as rests upon habit and routine. But above all has operated that thought of religion which thinks of it as an emotional revolution in the individual. To such a conception of religion family worship counts for little. But for one reason or another it has largely disappeared. The loss is unspeakable. We believe profoundly that the Church and ministry might well lay aside for a time all other projects if so be they could persuade or even shame Christian men into becoming the ministers of God in their own households. If this could be once brought about the Church would in her turn receive such an uplift as has not come to her for ages.

The notion that religion may be left to the unbiased choice of the child when arrived at years of discretion is a pestilent lie. It is "individu-

alism" run mad. Nine times out of ten the father who adopts it in the case of his own children does so either because he is morally too dull to care, or because his own life is such as makes him hesitate to mention religion to his wide-eyed child. Besides that, it is practically impossible. Leave a child unbiased? You little realize how well your son knows you. Probably he has a clearer idea of your religious beliefs than you have yourself. You don't go to church; you don't say your prayers; you don't admit religion as a thing to be considered in your own life. But you would like your son or your daughter to do so. Why should they? You profess an unwillingness to bias them. Can't you see that you do influence them every day, and with an influence which even under the law of persistence of force will go on to influence them after you are both dead and forgotten of living men?

No, the Christian home is the fountain of Christian living. Those families which hold together and pass onward an honored surname are the Christian families—those which are cemented by a community of religion. They survive because they deserve to survive. The family who sit about the dinner table upon whose bounty the father has craved the blessing of God do not quarrel across the board or drink too much when the cloth is drawn. An unconscious sense of the fitness of things restrains them. The hus-

band and wife who have knelt together in the morning to say Our Father are not found in the divorce court on that or any other day. The man who reads prayers with his family at breakfast goes to his office secure against a thousand temptations which may otherwise carry him away.

The family at Nazareth was devout—the son was subject to them. And therefore "He increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

XII.

SINS OF IGNORANCE.

"Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do."—LUKE xxiii. 34.

How far can the plea of ignorance be admitted in excuse for religious fault? Will it be enough for one to be able to say "I did not know it was wrong?" or to say "It is true I did not do such and such a thing, but it was because I did not know that I ought to have done it?" Can this plea be accepted by God? People generally take it for granted that in any case where one can honestly say that he did not know what he was doing, he will not be held to account by the Almighty. It becomes worth while, therefore, to look into this matter a little more closely. What does the plea of ignorance avail a man in the presence of human law? It is sufficient to disprove malicious intent, and that is all. It does not stop the law nor its execution. If the law has been broken, the consequences must go on. Ignorance, however, certainly does take away from the offense its moral guilt. There remains in such a case violation of law, but not violation of conscience. We are in the habit of thinking that God only

regards those things as wrong in a man which the man himself regards as wrong. This is the fundamental mistake. There are some things that are right and some things that are wrong from God's standpoint without any regard to what men may think of them. It is perfectly clear to those who look facts in the face that the plea of ignorance is not sufficient to stop the consequences of any wrong action that a man may commit. If he violate a law of the State, he must expect the consequences. If it is a physical law that is being dealt with, the same thing happens. The child puts his finger into the candle and it is burned. The poor child did not know that the candle would burn it, but it burned all the same. The same thing is true in the region of the affections. When the foolish Madam Esmond sentenced her two grown sons to the whip of the tutor, the young gentlemen rebelled. The enormity of the foolish mother's offense became plain to her at once, and she was willing to bend her proud soul to make any apology. But George took the vase from the mantel and let it fall on the hearth and, when it flew into a hundred pieces, he bowed to his mother and said: "You see it is broken; there is nothing farther to be said."

Now, in the region of religion there is a vague notion that if one can only say honestly "I did not know that I was doing wrong," he is thereby relieved from all moral responsibility and from

farther evil consequences. Or that if he can urge, as his excuse for the failure to perform some religious duty, that he did not really know or believe it to be his duty, he will, therefore, not be judged harshly for his failure.

The noteworthy thing about men, viewed from a religious standpoint, is their great lack of deliberate purpose and intention. For the most part they drift. Of the great multitude that surrounded our Lord in Jerusalem, there was a little group of His inexorable enemies; there was also a little group of devoted friends. These both are easily judged. From the point of view of the Master, it would seem to be easy to say to the one class, you are accepted forever, and to the other class, you are rejected forever. But what of the great multitude who surged up and down clamorously, one day crying, "Hosanna, Hosanna!" and the next day shouting, "Crucify Him, crucify Him"? It is clear that they had no intelligent idea of the situation, and were really in ignorance of what was the question about which it all turned. This is the situation yet. There is the great multitude of men who really have no opinions or information at all about God and duty. There is an equally great multitude who entertain most mistaken opinions. That is, they are honest in their ignorance, and they are honest in their mistakes. Will either their ignorance or their mistakes save them from evil consequences, or can they attain to spiritual

rewards without their ignorance or their mistakes being cured!

Let us look now at the text. Christ on the Cross in His agony sees the thoughtless crowd taking part ignorantly in the tragedy. He lifts His feeble head toward heaven and says, Father, forgive them, for they are ignorant! One cannot but suppose that His petition for them was granted, and that they were forgiven the guilt of their action. But that did not avail to take away from them and their children the dreadful consequences. This fact opens up an appalling question: Can sin be forgiven and its consequences still remain?

There is a widespread misconception of the whole situation right at this point. People have the notion that God's dealing with man is after a mechanical or bookkeeping fashion. They forget that the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven are biological laws. In the nature of the case they can only be in analogy with the laws of nature. To speak accurately, there are not in existence two classes of laws, but one. It depends upon the point of view whether you regard them as God's laws or nature's laws, for they are the same thing. God's laws do not shout; they do not call attention to themselves. They are content with simply existing. They wait to be found out. The question is, shall one find them out in advance and obey them? Or shall he go on carelessly until he discovers them through

the consequences of disobedience? This is the view of the matter that Christ evidently took. His purpose was not to proclaim new laws, new facts in the spiritual world, but to call attention to those which had always been in existence and always must be, and to provide some safe and hopeful method of dealing with them.

Men stand, therefore, in the presence of God, of life, of death, of immortality. These are all fundamental facts and forces. Their laws are laws which execute themselves. They do not need machinery. There is nothing arbitrary about them. Forgiveness will take the sting out of a past act of disobedience, but it does not profess to deal with the consequences of that disobedience. The transcendent value of Jesus Christ in this regard is the way in which He illuminates the whole situation. He calls Himself the "Light"; light upon the problem of living; upon the perplexing problem of duty; upon the mystery of dying; upon the mystery of living again. Those who walk in the light do not stumble. Those who disregard the light walk into perils, stumble, and are bruised. Their punishment is not penalty, it is consequence. They are not punished. They simply come to grief.

XIII.

OVER-CONFIDENCE.

"Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.'"—MATTHEW xxvi. 35.

THERE are some souls that sin scorches and shrivels clear away, but there are some whom it purifies like silver in the furnace.

The "Denial" of St. Peter is the story of a sin and a repentance. One night, a dozen men were reclining around a table, after supper, in a room in Jerusalem, dark-bearded, loose-robed Jews. They were unusually silent and restrained. The principal figure was quiet and thoughtful. The rest were either watching Him, or muttering something half articulately to the neighbors nearest them. It was a farewell supper, but there was no pledging of health, or jingling of glasses. Their Leader and Companion, with whom they had spent years of closest intimacy, was going to death to-morrow, and He knew it. After a while, one of them near the door arose quietly, and stealthily slipped out. He had gone to get his thirty pieces of silver.

Then the inner sadness of the soul of Christ came suddenly to the surface. He told them

plainly that He was going away from them, that after a while they would follow Him, but they could not do it now. He told them that a deep disgrace was coming upon Him, and that they would all forsake Him. This touched Peter in a tender place. If there was any point upon which he was sure of himself, it was his courage. Nothing was going to frighten him into leaving his friends. "Though all men should forsake Thee, yet will not I." Probably he did not mean to boast, but he seemed to put more confidence in his own faithfulness than that of the rest of them. At any rate he did not know what he was talking about, and ought to have kept quiet. It was not much more than a sentimentalism. No doubt he really had a good deal of affection for his Master, but he loved himself more. At any rate, friendship is not a thing which bears to be much talked about. Putting it into words soils it. Whoever loves a friend honestly, will have his love, like Cordelias, "More richer than his tongue." "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny thee," says Peter. But our Lord knew him better than he knew himself, for the stern answer came: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Before the cock crow thrice, thou shalt deny me three times." The story of Peter's fault is so well known that it does not need to be told. It was the sin of a good man. It was a sin which was the turning point of a good man's life. It was the driving and

ruinous storm of a tropical nature, which cleansed the air and made it pure. What are its lessons?

The first is that men yield readily to temptations which come upon the strong side of their nature. In the attack of a fort, the skillful general often tries to find a place where the garrison has trusted to its inaccessibility, and so left unguarded. It is a curious fact that three-fourths of the men who are accidentally drowned are good swimmers. One's real belief in his own power, helped out by his vanity, leads him beyond his strength. Peter was a brave man, and an honorable one, and yet his sin was a cowardly and contemptible one.

Another lesson is a most trite one. Avoid the beginning of evil. When Peter once told a lie he could not stop. He told it three times, and he would have told it a hundred times if he had been asked the question a hundred times. Did you ever tell a lie and then keep on telling it because you were ashamed to confess that it was a lie?

Another lesson is as to the use to make of our sins—the power to make of "our dead selves stepping stones to higher things." Judas and Peter both committed the same sin, and both repented alike, but their repentance was of different kinds. Judas repented and hanged himself. Peter repented and went back to his duty.

The end of this story was by the shore of the Lake of Galilee. There Peter was at his old

trade of fishing again, with not any of his old boastfulness or self-sufficiency—a still, backward, self-distrustful man. There, on the very spot where he had first left all to follow Christ, he saw Him again, and three times answered the question, "Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" not with any boastful profession, but humbly, "Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest I love thee."

God grant that as we every day follow St. Peter in his sin, we may at last be like him in his repentance.

XVI.

THE CRY FROM THE CROSS.

"Eloi, eloi, lamab sabacbtbanai, tbat is to say, My God, my God, wby bast tbou forsaken me?"—MATTHEW xxvii. 46.

THIS cry of Jesus from the cross probably indicates the low water mark of His experience in agony. It has a double interest. In the first place, it allows one to see into the interior of the emotions of that strange personality. In the second place, it answers to one of the most common experiences in human life. But to see precisely what it imports it is necessary to go back a little and look at what actually was His attitude toward God and man.

The characteristic thing about Jesus was His intense consciousness of God. Most men believe in God, but in them that belief is languid. It is a conviction, an assumption. It does not, as a rule, deeply touch their emotions. But with Him His good Father in heaven was more real than the people He saw on earth. He had with Him a perfect understanding—at least He evidently supposed He had. Probably He reached this understanding slowly. He "increased" as a child, and a young man, "in favor of God."

But whether He reached the conviction slowly or suddenly, the conviction itself was the moving spring of all His action. He seems to have said to Himself:

"I know what my Father in heaven is; His great divine heart is bursting with love for His human children; I will go among them, even as God does; I will be patient with them as God is patient; I will do them good as my Father does; I will make no distinction between the worthy and the unworthy; I will not be repulsed by indifference or ingratitude or unattractiveness; I will be perfect in divine charity, and God will add the rest." But the instant this determination formed itself in His mind, arose the great Temptation. He wished to uplift the world of men into companiohship with the Almighty, but the devil suggested, "Why not do this more quickly, more certainly, in a more striking way, and in a less painful way than you propose?" The temptation was tremendous, but He put it aside and started along what He calls His "Way."

For a while it looked as though the wisdom of this course would be vindicated at once. He attracted attention forthwith. His words were so gracious, His person was so charming, His gifts were so divine, that followers flocked to Him in troops. But success stirred the sleepy evil of the world. It took that evil several years to make up its mind, in its own stupid fashion,

that its relentless enemy was present. But it did make up its mind. His kinsmen called Him insane; His disciples advised caution and carefulness. He irritated the settled *régime* of selfishness and convention. His "way" rendered the ecclesiastical punctiliousness about Him of no meaning. If that Way should be adopted, it would disturb political customs, it would disturb men's habits, upset their ways of thought. They grew more and more exasperated, until finally they turned upon Him in rage and nailed Him on the cross. As He hung there, in the first pangs of His maddening agony, He seemed to have forgotten His physical pain in the overwhelming feeling that He had thrown His life away! To his blurred eyes men, whom He had so loved, whom He had so earnestly sought for, moved up and down, and their hoarse shouts and cries seemed to His dizzy brain the mocking laughter of demons. It was as though Satan, whom He had repulsed three years before in the wilderness, had come back with legions of fiends to mock Him for having been a fool. He sank for a moment into spiritual despair. He seems to have said to Himself, "Satan was right. I trusted in God, I committed my way to Him, I was as sure of Him as a son can be of a father, and now—my God, my God, thou hast forsaken me!" It was the groan of spiritual exhaustion.

What man is there who does not dimly recognize himself in this? There is such a thing as

"becoming weary in well-doing." A righteous man, or a would-be righteous man, despairs under the distress of actual living. He commits his way to God. God leads him for a little, then seems to leave him not only helpless, but with a sense of having been fooled. "For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. They say, doth God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High? They prosper in the world, they increase in riches, therefore I have cleansed my heart in vain, for all the day long I have been plagued." This is the spiritual despair of the good. The worldly man despairs in advance, and acts upon his spiritual skepticism. He refuses to set out in Christ's way at all, and from him this cry of agony never comes.

For the man, however, who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, who would trust his way to God, this outburst of hopelessness from the lips of the Master is full of comfort and uplift. He touched the bottom of such experience. There is no depth beyond. But having touched it He immediately rose again therefrom. The clouds which for a moment obscured God from His sight passed away. The extremity of physical pain was forgotten in the restoration of the unquenchable confidence in God, which returned again to its proper action. God had not forsaken Him. For the moment He thought He had. It was but

for a moment; He passed from the depths swiftly into that serene confidence in God which it is possible for all men to reach. Christ is the deliverer from moral despair, and in no portion of His work is He so completely a deliverer or one whom men follow so gladly.

XV.

FUTURE EXISTENCE.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." —1 CORINTHIANS ii. 9.

THE actual effect produced by a belief in future existence falls absurdly short of what one might naturally expect such a startling belief to produce. Men do believe in the fact, but for some strange reason it does not affect either their imagination or their conduct. The belief in a future life is, among us, practically universal. It would be hard to find a man who denies "the immortality of the soul." Why is it, then, that men being convinced, as they are, of the fact are, so far as one can see, uninfluenced by it? This cannot be explained by the remoteness of that future. It is not so very remote after all; it is not more than three score and ten years away from anybody, and is very much closer than that to most. Besides that, men do labor strenuously for remote things. One will spend a half century in building up a fortune according to the imagination which filled his mind in youth. One will

work a lifetime in the hope of a political preferment which the law of chances tells him is most unlikely even at the end. It is neither doubt of the fact nor the remoteness of the fact which accounts for the lack of practical effect which a belief in the future life produces.

Nor is very much gained by any attempt to fortify the fact by proof. It is perfectly easy to make an argument for immortality which seems to be cogent, but the trouble is that no one is moved by it. The etherial monotony of existence, which is the only kind that can be conceived of for an immortal soul, is too colorless to attract men's longings. Mere continuity in being may be, after all, a very doubtful boon.

What is wanted is not a proof of immortality, but some conception of a future life which can be presented before the imagination. What I want to know is not, if I die shall I live again, but what sort of life am I to have? This necessity has been deeply and widely felt. The attempt has even been made to answer it by drawing vivid pictures of hell and heaven. From the smoke, the flames, the ashes of the valley of Hinnom outside the city of Jerusalem, in which were consumed the bodies of beggars and asses and dogs, from which stenches arose and in which seething mass worms rioted, has been constructed a fancy picture of the future world of torment. Dante simply embellished such a picture; the canvas and the outlines were provided

ready to hand. His imagery, which once was sufficient to make men tremble, now only causes a smile. On the other hand, a celestial scenery has been constructed, within which the world has tried to catch glimpses of the fleeting phantoms of disembodied ghosts, incomplete, naked, colorless, unattractive. From a Persian paradise has been created a Christian heaven. It has been filled in fancy with childish delights, with blooming flowers, purling streams, and all the rest of it, but it has had little power to attract the average man. What repels in the current conception of the future life is its vagueness and barrenness, its monotonous uniformity, so that one is sometimes in doubt which he should prefer if he must choose between the conventional paradise or the conventional Gehenna. What is there in either of them that can arrest interest and hold the attention? The busy man, whose joy is work, has but languid longing for a heaven of rest. The artist who revels in beauty is little attracted by a heaven in which form has no place. The woman who lived in her affections is not attracted by the paradise within which she doubts whether she may meet the object of her affection. The student who seeks for knowledge is not drawn toward a state of existence within which learning may have no place or within which all knowledge is satisfied. Of course, in every man the instinct of existence itself is so strong, that he would probably prefer even a

monotonous, colorless, phantom-like existence rather than cease to be.

Now, are the materials available out of which to construct a future which will appeal to men's imagination and satisfy their longings? The central fact about which the thought and worship of Easter Day revolves seems to furnish the missing element for such a belief. A future life in order to be realizable must be an individual life which is furnished with a body as well as a soul. It is here that we discover the power of the Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ. It need hardly be said that we have not before us any anatomical or chemical question of the identity of physical matter. The truth is, the scientific world is only now beginning dimly to conceive of the possibilities which matter possesses. It is enough to say that the Lord of Life, after having laid down a body, manifested Himself again in a body. It is about the resurrection body of the Master that the ideas of immortality must ultimately crystallize. The value of the resurrection is that it gives the imagination as well as the understanding something to work upon.

Now, carrying with us the Christian belief that not bodiless, but embodied, men pass on through the veil, see how the whole aspect of the future life changes. For, remember, that the possession of a body implies an environment in which that body shall act. This belief lies in the back-

ground of the Seer's thought when he drew that gorgeous picture of the life to come: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, but I John saw a holy city and I heard a great voice saying: Behold the tabernacle of God. They shall be His people and God shall be their God. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did light it, and the nations shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it, and the gates of it shall not be shut by day, for there shall be no night there." It may be, indeed, that this is only a parable. It may be a bit of Oriental imagery. It may not correspond to the actual facts, it may be,

> "Poor fragments all of this low earth
> Such as in dreams could hardly soothe
> A soul that had once tasted of immortal truth."

But it is at least thinkable. It allures by a certain sense of reality which it possesses. In a life so conceived of, instead of arresting natural human powers and longings, an opportunity is opened up for their infinite widening out and expansion. When death, the illuminator, brings to one's sight the secrets which lie beyond "where old Bootes leads his leash or Sagittarius draws his bow in the south," an actual existence opens before the eye in which one can fancy himself living, and not, phantom-like, simulating

existence. There is in it the possibility of progress in character, in understanding, in affection, by means of endless action and kindly ministries.

> "For doubtless unto them is given
> A life that bears immortal fruit,
> In such great offices as suit
> The full grown energies of Heaven."

It brings satisfaction to the hungry affections, it enables the bereaved soul to walk not only serenely, but jubilant, into the great darkness with the expectation that there he may again catch "the sound of a voice that is still." In a word, it provides space and scope for every innocent appetite, every pure affection, every joyful activity:

> "To the lover full fruition
> Of an unexhausted joy;
> To the warrior crowned ambition
> With no envy's base alloy;
> To the ruler sense of action,
> Working out his great intent;
> To the prophet satisfaction
> In the mission he was sent."

XVI.

THE LIGHT THE CHRISTIAN SEES.

"The people which sat in darkness, saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."—MATTHEW iv. 16.

THERE are some problems which humanity has been facing all these centuries, which it seems they never will be able to settle. For example, the race has been experimenting ever since it emerged from savagery with the problem of government. It has not yet found the solution. It may seriously be doubted whether there is a community of ten thousand men upon the face of the earth which is even approximately well governed. Of course, some are better than others, but all fall infinitely below the ideal. Men are not even agreed, or anything like agreed, as to what is the best form of government, let alone the best method of administration. Or, again, the faculty has been for centuries wrestling with disease. It has not been able to find a cure for whooping cough or how to prevent seasickness. Or again, how shall men live together in society? This is sometimes called the social question. It simply means, How shall we guar-

antee that each man, woman, and child shall receive his or her share at the banquet of life, so that no one shall be shoved off in a corner to starve while some glutton eats too much and stows away in his pocket what he cannot devour. One may run through the whole circle of facts which make up human life, but he will find himself face to face with an unsolved problem at every turn. But, on the other hand, no one can deny that relatively great advance has been made in all these directions. Absolutely, the medical faculty has little control over the things which affect physical health, but relatively, it is a thousand miles in advance of where it was even a century ago. The same thing is true with regard to government and social order.

Now, I ask you to note that in any of these departments, the fact that a border of ignorance remains round about the spot which is illuminated by science, does not in any way discredit the knowledge which we do possess concerning that portion. Nor is there anything irrational in the hope that a complete answer will some day be found for every problem of human existence. It will not be in our day, to be sure, and no one would be hardy enough to say when it will be, yet there is nothing unreasonable in expecting that Science, with her torch in her hand, will move forward and outward until the light of that torch illuminates every portion of human existence.

Let us suppose, then, that this has already been accomplished, that there are no physical problems or social problems or political problems left unsolved. Suppose, indeed, that men knew everything there is to be known about their own bodies and about the universe in which they live. They would then be face to face with the great outstanding problem, the future life. In point of fact, men have already anticipated it. No generation has ever been content to wait, before facing the question of immortality, until it should have learned everything about this life. Is there any light from any quarter attainable upon this insistent question? "If a man die, shall he live again?" And if so be that he may live again, when and where and how, and owing to what causes? With regard to all the other dark places that I have mentioned, we expect that light will come from science, from observation, from experiment. But these methods are not available in this deeper question of existence. There are not a few, therefore, who bid us dismiss the problem altogether. They pronounce it insoluble. They bid us expend our energy within the world of nature. They count it worse than a waste of time to stand longingly before the supernatural. They say they have gone to the end of the road in that direction, and have found a barrier across it with the words "No thoroughfare."

It is hardly worth while for the agnostic to

give us this counsel. We will not heed it. Even though it be folly to go on questioning the world beyond, we shall still go on committing that folly. The mystery is so engrossing, simply regarded as a question, that even though one had no personal interest in it, he would still go on asking it. But beyond that, our affections are so entangled with this question. With this question unanswered, no man can lay his dead out of sight in the ground, without pondering as he walks back to his lonely home, "What has become of him?" "Where is she now?" The agnostic's advice will not be heeded. It will not be taken even by himself. When his child dies, or his own life runs low, he will ask the same question that we do. Now, is there no light forthcoming?

The Christian believes that he has a definite light upon this dark place. He does not assert that every corner of it is illuminated, or that no mystery remains in it. Nevertheless, he asserts that he has some knowledge here, which the non-religious man does not possess. He turns, in the first place, to the words, and in the second place, to the deeds of Jesus Christ; and what do they show him? From His words he learns what he has suspected to be true, that human existence does not lead to a *cul-de-sac*. It issues somewhere. The reason why he believes it leads somewhere is because Jesus has pointed out for the first time that it is entangled with the existence of God. Anything which has once been

taken up into the affections of the Eternal is thereby guaranteed a perpetuity of existence, because God's affections do not change. But it is chiefly the exemplification in Christ's own experience of the life beyond, upon which the Christian rests. He believes in the fact of the resurrection of the Man of Nazareth.

Of course he is quite aware that many persons dismiss all this as "supernatural," and therefore of necessity untrue. To this I reply that the question is not at all between the "natural" and the "supernatural." It is quite a different question. Is it true? Is it a fact that Jesus arose from the dead? If so, or indeed in any case, the division of existence into natural and supernatural is utterly unwarranted. There is no such division. Everything is natural and everything is supernatural. It depends on the point of view. There will never be, or can never have been a resurrection, unless resurrection be inintrinsically natural. The reason why the world has been filled with a sense of hopefulness by the fact of the resurrection of Christ, is that it sees in it the resurrection of a man, and therefore it has been shown to be natural under the proper conditions to humanity. This, briefly, is the light in which the Christian world sees. Theoretically, of course, it may not be a light shining from without upon one's path at all. It may be only a magnifying of those strange brilliant things which one sees in perfect darkness,

with his eyes tightly closed, which is mistaken for the light shining from heaven. Theoretically, this may be so, but I do not think that anyone who looks at the actual life of the Christian world, and the effect produced by the belief in this illumination, can bring himself to think that it is a mere fantasy. To the Christian, his Master is light along the path of living. He is light in the valley of the shadow. And he consoles himself with the serene confidence, that for him at any rate, "at eventide it shall be light."

XVII.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."—Acts xi. 26.

What is a Christian? It ought not be difficult to reply to this question, but if one seriously sets himself to do so, he will discover it is one of the most difficult terms to define that there is in existence. What, for example, is the essential difference between a Hebrew elder and a Presbyterian elder or an Episcopalian vestryman, assuming that all three, so far as their morality and uprightness of life go, are equal? Theoretically, the difference between the Jew and the Christian, or between the man of the world and the Christian, ought to be palpable, but it is not.

Speaking broadly, there have been three definitions of the word Christian practically accepted. The first is what may be called the popular definition. In its judgment it turns solely upon the degree of goodness which a man possesses. If one is found to be so good—that is, so honest, and truthful, and pure, and kindly, and gentle—that he compels the admiration of men, they

point to him and say, "that man is a Christian." This is the definition which underlies most of the common speech upon the subject.

The second definition is one which obtains in certain very large and influential circles of Christian people themselves. It may be called the emotional definition. To its way of thinking, the Christian is one whose life and character have been consciously transformed by the force of an interior experience, which is referred to as the influence of Christ working upon the soul by the agency of His Holy Spirit. It refers this experience, as a rule, to some definite point of time and place. It says a Christian is a man who has been truly converted. By that it means a person who has passed through, at some time or other, some definite, distinct series of emotions which he can recall to his memory, and the stages of which he can rehearse with distinctness. This is the definition which would be accepted by the Salvation Army, and by all who are in sympathy with its mode of operation and speech.

The third definition may for convenience' sake be called the ecclesiastical one. According to it, a Christian is one who has been made so by having received the initiatory rite of baptism, and thus having been made a member of the outward and visible organization. The organization itself is clearly defined, and is called the Church of Christ. The Christianity of such a one is measured by the accuracy of his obedience to the

rules and regulations of the society. These three definitions—the ethical, emotional, and ecclesiastical—may fairly sum up all the attempts that are usually made to define what is a Christian.

Now, will any of these, or any combination of these, of necessity produce that sort of character which was "first called Christian at Antioch"? I reply that, in the first place, all the characters described above may be produced and, in point of fact, have been produced, apart from Christ altogether. There have been, and are, multitudes of good men who have never heard of Christ. There are myriads of men and women who have passed through the most terrific upheavals of religious emotion, whose lives are anything but what the Christian standard would require. There are myriads of members of the ecclesiastical organization who have been made so by regular process, and who scrupulously obey all the mandates of the association, whose spirit and temper are clearly alien to that of the little band of followers who first came to be described as Christians. The member of the society may be utterly ignorant and brutal. A man whose religious experience has been most cataclysmal, may be deeply immoral. A man in whose character no flaw can be pointed out, may still be entirely untouched by the spirit of the Master. What, then, was the intention of Jesus, the Master, with regard to His followers? The reply is at hand. It was to make them like Himself.

At this point many hesitate. They say: "That is impossible. He, you know, was divine. He approached the stern problem of living with a supernatural equipment in mind, and heart, and soul, which is different in kind, and not alone in degree from that with which the ordinary man is compelled to regulate his life." But that was not His opinion. He challenged His followers to follow Him—that is, to walk in His footsteps—and He carried this demand to the highest power. He bade them to be perfect—not alone as He was perfect, but as their Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.

To say, then, what is a Christian, it is only needful to look at what He was; to see what His attitude toward God, toward man, and toward life. What, in fact, was the religion of Jesus Christ? It should not be forgotten that Christ was the first Christian. He set the standard, and men are Christians or not, according to whether or not they conform to that standard. What, then, was His own religious consciousness? In the first place it was the intense conviction that He was the child of His Father in heaven. To Him this was not a theological dictum, nor any mystical act of faith. It was the self-evident, every-day fact upon which He proceeded. He rested securely upon the affection which He discerned that a parent must feel for his offspring. He uncovered the fact that men's salvation is due, not so much to the fact that they need

God, as that God needs them. This was the foundation of His own religion. He was more conscious of His father in heaven than He was of His brethren on earth.

In the second place, out of this profound perception of the reality of God's affection for Him, sprang the way in which He regarded other men. He asserted that they were His kinsmen; that they were kinsmen of one another, and that they were the offspring of God. He insisted that they should think of, and act toward, each other as brothers of the same blood. But He insisted that whatever different opinion their fellow-man may have, they must never forget that his action is still the action of a brother. If it be a harmful or hateful action, it is still the action of a brother. One must deal with those who offend him, and persecute him, as one deals with the son of his own father and mother who deals unfairly with him. These things being realized, He asserted that life would be changed from a field wherein each one sought for a selfish accumulation of his own things, into a place where each one should seek the other's good. He says in effect: "This is My way. Follow Me. In proportion as you follow Me, you shall become Christians."

Now, in the presence of this, men stand hopeless. They say it is a fair, a gracious dream. It is an idealist's way of looking at life and men. It cannot be put into practical operation in a

world like this. It would have been possible in Paradise, or it may become possible when the millennium comes, but in a world of flesh, and blood, and matter like this, it is an idle dream. Now, it is to be observed that at one point, and that a crucial point in His own career, He felt the same way. The forty days of his temptation was the anguish caused by this feeling, but He fought it through and emerged therefrom serenely, and started upon the path of a Christian. The path was arduous to the last degree, but it brought for Him its own compensation. It brought for Him reviling from the lips of a wise world, but it also brought to Him the abiding love of the best of the human race. It brought Him to the cross, but being steadfastly persisted in, it brought him out of the tomb.

To be a Christian, then, is to deliberately venture upon a mode of life which the world pronounces impossible, to embark upon an adventure which He Himself says will bring the cross. The willingness to take this venture, and the steadfastness to abide in it, in spite of the weight and the agony of the cross which it brings, is the mark and distinction of a Christian.

XVIII.

WHO IS HE?

"He asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias, and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"—MARK viii. 27–29.

THERE are at least two "Christs" to-day in human thought. That is to say, there are two conceptions of this great personality, which are entertained by so entirely distinct classes of people that there may be said to be two Christs. The first is the Christ of popular religion. This conception finds expression perhaps in the most complete and uncompromising form from the lips of the exhorters and hallelujah lasses of the Salvation Army. It appears in Moody and Sankey hymns; indeed, it finds expression in a greater or lesser number of the hymns in every hymn book. It conceives of Christ in one or the other of three aspects: Either he is a pilgrim waiting at a closed door, with staff in hand, with sandals on His feet, tired, dusty, with a weary face, knocking, knocking, knocking, waiting patiently for the convenience of those within to open the door; or He is conceived of as hanging

upon a cross; or else as a judge sitting upon a judgment seat, upon the lofty platform of a semi-circular assize, within which are multitudes of men, women, and children from every tribe, tongue, and nation under heaven, waiting their turn to be summoned to the bar and to receive their sentence.

These three presentations practically exhaust the popular idea of Christ. I do not say whether they are true or false, but I do say that they are inadequate, and that no one of them nor all three of them together can ever be rested upon finally as a complete conception of the Son of God. But a somewhat loose combination of these constitutes the popular idea of the Christ.

The second is the Christ of theology. It is difficult to characterize this conception in a few strokes so that it will be recognized. Let us recall, for the purpose of identifying it, the thought about Christ which lies at the root of the great theological controversy around His person which took place centuries ago. It is a personality constructed out of metaphysical propositions. It has no flesh and blood, nor has it much in it which one can recognize of human qualities of any sort. It is rather the pre-existent Christ—that is to say, the Son who was before the incarnation. About this conception raged the warfare of Arius, Athanasius, of the Monothletes and the Monophysites, of "substance" and "ousia" and "Kenosis" and

such ancient phrases. In more modern days it is the conception of Christ about which Trinitarians and Unitarians have had their battle. The spiritual interest of our age seems to be working loose from this conception of Christ, as it is from the Christ of the hymn-book. The one seems to us to be a Christ of parchment, the other to be a Christ of magic.

An attempt is being seriously made, therefore, to reach a more satisfactory answer to the second of the inquiries of our Lord contained in our text: "Whom say ye that I am?" But this question cannot be answered intelligently until His previous inquiry is dealt with: "Whom do men say that I am?" If men have answered wrongly or insufficiently, the error and inadequacies of their answer must be dealt with. This is precisely what is now going on. The Higher Criticism is simply an attempt to re-examine the original witnesses and ascertain what they actually did say about this wonderful Person. To the same end archæology and theology have addressed themselves. To this same purpose Lives of Christ have been written, and are being read more, probably, than any other books. Liddon and Fairbairn and Harnack and Gore and Bishop Carpenter and Dr. Edersheim have all been occupied with the same task. They are attempting to reply to the inquiry which Christ always addresses to His disciples: "Whom do men say that I am?"

At this point the objection is generally made: "Why raise this question at all? It is settled. The answer was given and understood nineteen, or at least sixteen, centuries ago. Since the formation of the Catholic Creeds there has not only been no necessity for any such re-examination of the person of Christ, but the loyal Christian is debarred from going behind the statements then made, or modifying them in any way." To this objection we reply that it may be well or ill taken, but it is beside the mark. It makes little difference whether Christian people wish to face this question or not, they have no choice. The question has come up. It clamors for an answer, and an answer of some sort it will get either from those who have the right to make it or it will formulate its own reply. We believe it is always in order, and always will be so long as Christianity endures, which will be as long as humanity endures. No one generation of men ever has, or ever will, give the final, exhaustive definition of Christ. His personality is too great. One cannot define God. One can only interpret Him, as the generations go on, in terms which will be intelligible to each generation. That the conception of His person has changed from time to time, can be seen in a very striking way by looking at the expressions by which Art has attempted from time to time to portray the inmost thought of the Christian world. Let one move about a little while amid the mediæval paintings of Christ

and look intently at the wan, bloodless figure and features there portrayed; then let him turn to the robust, vigorous, but still other worldly Christ of the Renaissance, and he will see that he is in the presence of two widely contrasted conceptions of the person of Christ. Let him then turn his back upon both these, and stand before the contemporary Christ by Hoffman, Munkaczy, Holman Hunt, or Verestchagin, and he will realize that he has again passed into the presence of a still more widely different ideal.

Should all this disturb the Christian? Should he be frightened by the assertion that all this argument reduces Christianity to a figment of the imagination, and that each generation may therefore construct its own figment? None but the most shallow-minded, easily-frightened soul will be disturbed thereby. The truth is that the supreme proof of the divinity of Jesus is to be found in this universality, which provides satisfaction for not only the spiritual needs, but the intellectual conceptions of successive generations. And it does all this without going outside the circle of His actual being; nay, without even approaching anywhere near the frontier of that circle. The present movement, with all its faults, must be pronounced wholesome and full of good promise. Its outcome will be a contemporary Christ, intelligible to our own needs, and whom we will willingly bow before and hail as, "our Lord and our God!"

XIX.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."—MATTHEW vii. 20.

THAT there is some relation between men's conduct and their religious belief is generally conceded, but it is not so easy to see precisely what the connection is. There appear to be many whose conduct is irreproachable who seem to have no clear religious convictions whatever. There are many whose orthodoxy is unquestioned whose conduct is far from being what it should. It brings up the question, Can a man be what we call good if he be not, to some extent at least, what we call a Christian? Call to mind, if you will, a discussion which was started some years ago by an unknown paragraph writer after the death of Mr. Darwin and his burial in Westminster Abbey. Mr. Darwin was not a Christian from our standpoint. His belief was either altogether wanting or altogether faulty, yet when his biography came to be published, it portrayed a life so clean, so sweet and kindly and true, that it might appear that such fruits could only spring from Christian roots. A simi-

lar controversy was awakened on the death of Sir Moses Montefiore. He was a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet his life was Christian in the highest and deepest and truest sense. One might mention in the same way such men as the late Mr. Emerson, the great Dr. Leidy, and others. In all these cases their conduct, as tested by any fair standard, must be pronounced worthy in the very highest degree, but their belief was either wanting or erroneous.

Is there, then, any essential connection between a man's religious creed and his moral life? There are two classes of persons who answer No to this question. The first is the secularist. He asserts that uprightness of life is entirely independent of one's theological or religious convictions. That life, he says, is best administered which takes the least account of any other possible life. A negative answer is also given by a large class of deeply religious people. The evangelical declares that salvation is by "faith." By faith he does not mean the belief in any set of doctrinal propositions, but a mystical intercourse between the soul itself and God. He is rather jealous than otherwise of good works. He separates goodness into two kinds—one of them he calls Religion, and the other he calls Morality.

Now, we should dismiss both these classes of objectors as mere theorists. The one is the theoretical moralist, the other is the theoretical

religionist. They are too logical by half. The experience of practical men, who take the complex and contradictory facts of life as they are, is against them both. The common sense of men goes with Christ when He declares that "you cannot gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles," and when He says that "he that doeth my will shall understand my doctrine."

The truth of the principle of our text to the facts of human life is best seen when we look at those facts upon a large scale. The lawlessness of the restless Greeks projected itself outward and upward, and constructed their turbulent gods, who brawled and intrigued in Olympus. The Hindoo lasciviousness of life expresses itself in their obscene idols. The agnostic disbelief in God manifests itself in disbelief in man. Jesus' assertion is clearly true. Wherever that kind of life is seen which we have come to recognize as Christian, he implies that the doctrine of that man must be Christian, even though the man himself be unconscious of it. "His creed cannot be wrong whose life is in the right."

It is startling to see how entirely Jesus adopts this principle. He makes conduct the test in His final classification of men. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren," or "inasmuch as ye have not done it to one of these" your destiny is fixed. Your conduct is your own announcement of your own character.

Now, taking this principle in our hand, we have a key to some of the gravest practical perplexities which concern us. For example, it enables us in the religious realm to discover and identify the Church. Among all the rival organizations, each and all claiming to be Churches, how shall a man know the Church when he sees it? It is very common to apply the test of history—that is, to maintain that a particular organization reaches in an unbroken line to the beginning of things and thus proves itself to be the Church. It is very common to appeal to orthodoxy—that is, to establish by logical processes that the doctrines of a particular organization are logically coherent and capable of proof. These contentions are both valuable for certain purposes, but not for this one. The appeal is to life. *That is the true Christian Church which actually produces Christians.* If it fail to do this, neither its pedigree, nor its orthodoxy, nor its propriety, nor its magnitude, nor its power, nor any other quality whatsoever will vindicate its claim to the name of Church. The test is most exacting. It is so hard to bear, that those others which we have named are almost always preferred before it. Nevertheless, it is the final test which Christ imposes upon the Church as He does upon the individual.

The same principle is the key to the intrinsic truth of Creeds. The appeal here again is not to Scripture, nor to antiquity, nor to logic, and cer-

tainly is not to force, whether the force express itself through the familiars of the Inquisition or the anathema of a Church Council. The appeal again is to life. Those doctrines are Christian, and are true, which produce, in the individuals who hold them, that manner of life which Jesus demands.

Once more, it gives the answer to the most pressing and probably the most painful of all questions—that is, as to one's own acceptance with God. To find relief in his distress, and to decide what his condition actually is, a man is often mistakenly bidden to look within, to examine his own experiences, to observe his own feelings. Nothing could be more hopeless, nothing could be more useless. He is not to look within—he is to look at his life. If he find himself doing and loving the things which Jesus bids, he may be confident that he is believing the things which Jesus believes. He does not test the flavor of the fruit of his life either by digging down to examine its roots or by vainly trying to force it to bear flowers, but by looking honestly at the fruits to see whether or not they are wholesome, well-flavored, and good to sustain life—or whether they are shrunken, blighted, and bitter.

XX.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRISTIANITY.

"They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."
—MARK i. 22.

RELIGION is an excessively difficult thing. And the most difficult of all religions is the religion of Christ. It bids its adherent to do a thousand things which he does not like to do. It bids him refrain from a thousand alluring things which he wishes to do. In a word, it insists upon his conducting his life after a very arduous fashion. Now, any institution or any master who lays such burdensome obligations upon one must be a master who is able to speak with authority. Wherein rests the authority of Christianity? Why should we do what it commands? Why should we avoid what it forbids? And, most difficult of all, why should we accept as true its very marvelous and difficult doctrine? What is the authority, and where is it to be found?

There are two places in which it has frequently been sought. The first is a written code called a Bible. The second is an authoritative

corporation called the Church. "Hear the Word and obey it," says one class of people. "Hear the Church and obey it," says another class of people. Both these assume that their particular authority speaks with clearness, and must be obeyed under penalty. Let us examine these a little. There are many probably who, without much thought, would accept the statement that "the Bible is the sole rule of faith and practice." Now, let us see what this implies. It implies that God has written down a detailed code of rules and regulations which are applicable to every situation in life, and which are so plain that any man may comprehend them, and that they are actually in the possession of every human being who is to be judged by them. When one looks closely, however, he sees that not a single one of these requirements is fulfilled. The Christian society, as a matter of fact, had been in existence for centuries, had organized itself, and had accomplished its best work before it actually had a Bible in its hands at all. Then, again, the collection of books which we call the Bible, is a fragmentary survival of a far larger religious literature of the early Church, the greater portion of which has disappeared. And yet again, it is notorious that with regard to many important practical affairs there is the widest disagreement even among devout Christians as to what the Bible actually does teach or command. So that it

appears upon examination that this source of authority, while it may be of value theoretically, is practically not workable. Even the man who professes himself most ready to accept the Bible as his final authority on all subjects, exercises his own authority in the very act of accepting what he thereafter regards as a superior authority. And even when he has done so, it is notorious that he has formally prostrated himself before an authority which does not actually control his conduct. He himself would probably be the first to confess this.

The second position is even less satisfactory, when it comes to be tried by the hard test of actual experiment. Submit yourself to the authority of the Church, such an one says. See now what this involves. It implies that in the first place God has at some point in history selected a society of men to whom he has intrusted His secrets, and to whom He has delegated His authority. It implies further that this is not only a *de jure*, but also a *de facto*, authority; that it possesses the wisdom to issue rules, to hear causes, to pronounce judgments which are, so far forth, the very acts and judgments of God himself. This is very well as a theory, but it is beset with insuperable practical difficulties. For example, one must say: "Before I thus accept the Church's authority, I must in my own mind at least pass upon its credentials. I must ask why it professes to

speak in the name of God. This means that I must examine its history, its constitution; that I must learn who and where and what it is before I submit myself to its guidance."

Now, please to observe that in this examination we are in search of an authority which will not only awaken a sense of obligation, but which can actually get itself obeyed. Neither of the two which we have thus briefly noticed have so far been able to compel obedience. The most extravagant Protestants have never actually obeyed the mandates of the Bible, at least according to the opinion which each sect has of all the others. The most ultra Romanist could not assert that the Church had ever been able to secure the obedience to her commands which is desirable. In both cases the authority is not much more than a theory. What the every-day man wants is to be brought into the presence of some divine master whose right to command will become evident the instant he stands in such a master's presence, and to find an authority which will either convince his judgment or overawe his conscience. He wants some person who will bid him do the right, bid him in such stern tones that his reluctant will will bend; who will solicit him to high and holy things, and solicit him in such gracious and attractive manner that his heart will go out to meet the master at least halfway.

This craving and necessity of the religious

nature is the one which Jesus satisfied. He spake not as the Scribes, with the authority of Scripture, nor as the Pharisees, with the authority of the Church, but as God, who speaks straight to and is understood by the divine faculty which remains, even in ruins, in the nature of every man. I maintain, therefore, that the only possible authority in the realm of religion is the actual, living Christ. What we are in search of is the answer not to an intellectual, but to a moral, question. "What must I do to be saved?" To this end it is necessary to go back, straight past the Church, past the Bible into the very presence of the Son of Man. The soul when it once stands in His presence bows itself spontaneously. The will which is touched by His will, yields itself to the divine solicitations.

"But," it is objected, "this is impossible. All that we know of Him we learn through the medium either of the Bible or of the Church. You now ask us to disregard both these, who are our only teachers, and to seek for a personal interview with the Master Himself. This is impossible. He has gone. He has left the record of Himself, and we can only know Him through the record." This is true, but being so treated, the question of the authority of the record does not rise at all. It is to be used at this stage just as the facts of life are ordinarily used by everybody—that is, without examina-

tion, without any special thought. In point of fact, the image of Christ is more vivid in the world than is that of any other personality whatsoever. He lives and is present, and, within Christendom at least, everybody knows who and what He is. The Bible and the Church have introduced the world to Him, but when one is led into the presence chamber of a king it becomes a matter of comparatively small moment who his introducer has been: the real question is concerning his royalty. Has he or has he not a countenance to command? Is he or is he not every inch a king? Actually the authority of Christ manifests itself in His self-evident divinity. The soul that is to any degree in sympathy with Him, and with God, recognizes Him and submits its life to His guidance.

Having done so, the literature which we call the Scripture becomes intelligible. It ceases to be thought of as a substitute for an absent Christ, and is seen to be, what it actually is, the liturgy which sings the praises of a living Lord. The Church ceases for such an one to be a hard, unlovely political organization which deals in laws and penalties, and comes to be seen as it is, the family whose elder brother is the Master, whose father is the Father in heaven, and the rule of whose household is the law of love.

XXI.

THE FAULTY MORAL NATURE.

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."—EPHESIANS iv. 18.

THE words "life of God" in this text may be taken to mean either religious doctrine or religious conduct. That is to say, it may refer to what people believe in the sphere of religion, or to what they do or leave undone from religious motives. Now, it is perfectly evident that there are thousands of people who do not possess any knowledge of God, whichever sense may be attached to the phrase. Practically God is for them either non-existent or is only an idea. The idea is vague, impalpable, does not come actually within the range of their every-day experience. Suppose it should be demonstrated to-morrow, for example, by some new discovery in the physical sciences, or by some new process of logic, that God is non-existent, that humanity up to this point has been deceived in believing in the existence of such a being. Is it not true that there are thousands of human beings in whom

such a discovery would not compel any conscious change of life? The world to them would go on precisely as it does now. They would not feel practically conscious of any loss. They would not weep over the destruction of God. They would not even, like a decadent Greek, cry out in anguish: "Great Pan is dead!" The reason is that God is not a conscious element in their living at all.

Probably not a few would acknowledge this. If they should be asked why it is that so tremendous a fact as God is not practically needed by them, they would say: "We do not think very much about God, or the subject-matter of religion, chiefly on account of the uncertainty and obscurity of its alleged facts. Take, for example," they would say, "such common religious conceptions as those of prayer, providence, immortality, the incarnation of God in Christ. These things may be true, or may be false; we do not deny them, we do not accept them. The truth is our minds are so constituted that they do not take hold of them in any real sense." This explanation may be offered in perfect good faith. They have not the knowledge of God because, to their way of thinking, anything worthy of the name of knowledge concerning God is not attainable.

St. Paul, in the text and elsewhere, assigns, however, an altogether different explanation for this ignorance. He says that men are destitute

of the knowledge of God, not because such knowledge is vague and elusive, not because it is unattainable, and not because it is unimportant. The facts, he says, are not imaginary. They are the most real facts in existence—more real, indeed, than the facts of every-day life. He ventures to say that the things which are seen are temporal, whereas those things which are unseen are abiding. He asserts that the evidence for them, if it be sought in the right quarter, is overwhelming and conclusive—that any man can reach it if he wishes. But he makes the assertion that the reason why men do not see God is because their moral nature is so faulty that they cannot.

Right here men protest, and frequently with a feeling of anger. They reply to one who takes St. Paul's position: "No; we will not permit you to say that. We are skeptics—yes; we are not ashamed of it. If knowledge were within our reach on these important subjects we would accept it and utilize it. But we will not permit you to say that we are unbelievers or doubters because we are immoral—that will not do. If it comes to a comparison of character between ourselves and those who profess and call themselves Christians, while we do not seek for such a comparison, yet we will not shrink from it. Tried by any reasonable test of morality, our lives are as good as the lives of those who assert more or less loudly that they possess the knowledge of God."

Now, this confession of theirs may be true,—very likely it is,—for, indeed, God is not much more than a theoretical admission with any of us. But, however far the Christian may fall short of his profession, St. Paul is right, and the conscience of humanity knows that he is right. It is willful wrongness of life which causes unwillful disbelief. It is the "fool," that is to say, the wicked man, who has said in his heart there is no God. If you turn your thought away for a moment from the consideration of individuals to the consideration of masses of humanity at certain periods, you will see that this is true. Take by way of illustration two well-known periods in modern history; one is the latter half of the eighteenth century in England, and the other is the period of the revolution in France. They were both characterized by widespread religious disbelief. The knowledge of God seemed to the casual observer to have disappeared completely from the purview of humanity. But to the historian who studies carefully either of these periods, it becomes evident that the moral debauchery was not the effect, but the cause, of the religious skepticism. It was because for various reasons men did not wish to retain God in all their thoughts that they fell into all "wretchlessness of evil living." When the faith returned, or began to return, as it did in the first quarter of this present century, it returned as the result of the recovery of moral

purity. But the moral elevation came back before the religious belief returned.

This principle lies at the very root of the teaching of Jesus Christ. "If any man wills to keep my commandments, he shall learn of my doctrine whether or not it be from God." "He that doeth my will shall know of my doctrine." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." These are not mere *obiter dicta.* The connection is quite easily traceable. For example, the self-indulgent man who refuses to be disturbed in the ease and comfort of his life by human wrongs, and is untouched by the spectacle of human wretchedness, who is unwilling to lift a finger to alleviate humanity's distress, such a man is incapable of any real knowledge of God. He cannot know Him because he has no sympathy with Him. The relation between God and man is a relation between persons, and, in order to real acquaintanceship between persons, there must be to some extent sympathy in character. Or again, the greedy, rapacious, unscrupulous, dishonest man comes very quickly to disbelieve in future rewards or punishments. His sense of justice fades away because his practice of justice first disappears. He loses the spiritual faculty which keeps account of such a fact, and therefore with him the fact ceases to be a fact. Or, the frivolous, capricious, dainty, selfish woman loses all capacity of insight into spiritual things. She

has no sympathy with them. So also, sins of the flesh surely obliterate one's own sense of divinity. The obscene man ceases to believe himself to be in any sense divine, and it quickly follows that the divinity that there is in the universe comes to him to be non-existent. Serving Mammon makes Mammon to be to its worshiper the only true god.

It is this principle which relieves God's exacting command for belief from the charge of unreasonableness and inequity. If religious belief depended upon intellectual capacity, men are so unequally endowed in this possession that it would be unfair to hold them to the same standard in regard to their possession or lack of faith. Yet, since God appeals not to the understanding, but to the conscience, and since conscience is the faculty which is possessed by all men, and which is largely independent of intellectual advancement, but is cultivable by the learned and unlearned alike, therefore God makes His appeal to that capacity which is constant, abiding, and eternal in all men, and which, so long as it retains its own consciousness, can look God in the face and bow before Him in adoration. But if it becomes obtunded or dulled, then the whole universe of divineness becomes non-existent.

XXII.

SATAN'S DIVIDED KINGDOM.

"If Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?"—LUKE xi. 18.

A MARKED peculiarity of Christianity is to be found in the fact that its members always look forward with confidence to a good time coming. By this they mean a good time, not necessarily a happy time. They mean a time when moral goodness shall become dominant and evil shall, little by little, be brought under foot and finally crushed out. It is moral hopefulness which really is the spring out of which flows all the peculiar activities of Christendom. Why do Christians look for this? As they take their stand at any particular point in the progress of the world, and look about them, the world is filled with evil. They are confronted with bad men, bad things, bad institutions. They look these in the face serenely, and expect that they shall all ultimately either pass away or be transformed and have their places taken by good men, good institutions, and good things. But really it looks as though the experience of life were sufficient to crush out this expectation of a good time to

come. In the text that we have to-day, Jesus illuminates the whole situation by a single expression, as by a flash of lightning, revealing the principle which lies at the bottom of it all. He points out that the kingdom of evil is divided. It contains within itself the causes and the pledge of its own ultimate destruction. Satan's kingdom is divided. Wherever there are two devils they quarrel, and where there is only one, he, by the very necessity of his own being, slowly commits suicide. The pledge of the future triumph of goodness, then, is in the fact that evil cannot hold together.

I know that there is a vague sort of feeling that the converse of this is true. In our moods of moral despondency we are apt to fancy that wrong is a great, mighty, well-organized army; that it moves toward its own ends by well-calculated methods, and that the good is always at a disadvantage in the presence of it. If one looks no further, he is like to be filled with a feeling of despair. He says goodness is identified with weakness; evil is strong because it is unscrupulous. Now, for anyone who is in this mood, it will be well to seriously consider two facts. The first is the moral advance of the race as a whole. No one will question that the moral status of the race is infinitely better to-day than it was three or four thousand years ago. It has steadfastly moved forward, through primeval bestiality; through savage turbulence, and vio-

lence, and cunning, and cruelty, and lust; through barbarism and semi-civilization, until it has reached the point where it is to-day. But it has left most of its faults behind it. Now, why has it done so? One may answer, "It has been due to the force of civilization." But that is simply to say the same thing another way; it is not at all to give a reason or explanation for it. It is due to the fact that the evil against which the good of life is compelled to contend, always disorganizes itself and ultimately disappears. It is due to the fact that right is strong, and wrong, with all its boastfulness and cunning, is weak. In the long run good triumphs over the devil.

Or, regard again another fact, even more striking, within a smaller area, and which has manifested its phenomena within a shorter period. I mean the development, growth, and progress of the Christian Church. That institution is one which from the beginning has been organized around the idea of righteousness. It has been its purpose to keep alive this idea, to feed it, to revive it when it became faint, and to ultimately secure its triumph. Now, at the beginning there was never a more quixotic idea suggested than the establishment of the Church. It was a little, insignificant, apparently loosely organized society, which set itself up and undertook to make head against the most corrupt, and at the same time the most highly organized, institution

that the world has ever seen. It was a little band of idealists against the whole Roman Empire. But the facts show that it has steadily made head against all opposition. It has had in it the power from time to time to throw off its own abuses, to correct its own faults, to recur again constantly to its central organizing principle, and having taken a fresh draught of truth from the spring which rests within itself, it has gone out again refreshed to its battle against the world of evil. All hostile organizations have gone down before it. All false churches one after another disappear. The gates of hell really have not prevailed against it. Now, why? It is feeble, relatively. Its weapons are not striking, and its organization is apparently of the very simplest. It has succeeded because it has for its adversary a power which always has traitors in its own camp. The devil can never count on the loyalty of his own forces. His kingdom is organized around the principle of individual selfishness, and where that principle is recognized, the individual always seeks his own. However he may declare that he is working for the good of the devil's kingdom, he is really working for himself. He will throw the devil overboard without scruple if he can win by it.

The ordinary experience and observation of life bears out this fundamental truth of Christ. We say, "When rogues fall out honest men will

get their due." We say it because we expect confidently that rogues will fall out. It is impossible in the nature of the case that their league shall be abiding. The Psalmist observed long ago that "the wicked man does not live out half his days." In any community, in any city community, at any rate, there is probably a majority of persons who individually would prefer license and lawlessness to law and the administration of justice. That is, each of them would prefer it for himself. Those who really love righteousness for its own sake, in any community, are but an insignificant minority. Nevertheless, their idea of life prevails, and the majority submits and even pretends that its own mind and intent goes with that of the minority. It submits because evil is incapable of permanent organization. The schemes of venal men in the long run break down. The plans of unscrupulous and avaricious corporations and societies always in the end bring defeat to themselves. Of course, they can do unmeasured evil before their defeat comes, but God has much time before Him, and is infinitely patient. "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small."

Now Jesus' definition of "faith" is simply the willingness of an individual to trust his personal fortunes to the right rather than to the wrong. He declares that such an action is wise and prudent. It looks unwise and imprudent in the face of the surface facts of life. But Jesus points out

that the kingdom of evil contains within it the necessity of its own destruction. All persons and things who are in any way entangled with it, He declares, must either work themselves free from it or perish with it. Its rule is that of a monarch who is impotent to protect his subjects. The process is long and the waiting is weary, but in the ages of ages only good can be. At long last Satan, like a snake ringed by fire, will strike himself and die.

XXIII.

THREE TYPES OF FAITH.

"How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"—Acts ii. 8.

There are dialects of thought as well as speech—natural differences of temperament and character to which the Gospel adapts itself. In a rough way, men may be grouped into three great classes upon which the spirit of Christ may fall, and each of them, when touched and awakened, utters the "wonderful works of God" in a language peculiar to itself.

The first is one which is so common in our day and land that it is hard to characterize. No one word so well fits it as the word "upright." This class is distinguished by a mind calm, level, and clear, "chiefly intent upon a well-colored life." Such a man is chiefly concerned with living rightly. He recognizes with an intense keenness the sacred authority of all human duties and affections. He is honest—so honest that dishonesty has no temptation for him. He reveres honor, veracity, and good faith so much that he expects them like the daylight, and he hears of or sees

their violation with a feeling of scorn. His word is as good as his bond, and he expects that you will not go back from yours. Foreign missions do not interest him, but he esteems it a personal disgrace if his own parish is in debt. He gives more than he promises; he does more than he says; he obeys all the requirements of morality, for he would despise himself if he did not.

Now, when religion comes to speak to this man, what shall it say? If it comes as subtle theological distinctions he listens bewildered or goes asleep. If it comes as a sweeping emotion it only disturbs him and makes him uncomfortable. Sometimes he stops short of any avowal of conscious religion at all. This is not often the case, however. These men as a rule take kindly to religion. They form very noticeably the rank and file of the Church. They are her mainstay and her safest support. But the Gospel must and does speak to them in a language they can understand. The one word for them is *law*. They carry forward their character as men, and make it the basis of their Christian structure. Here is a summing up of their Gospel. Obedience to duty is the rule of their life in any case. God reveals the right, gives an example of the right, tells the reward of the right and declares the punishment of wrong, and offers a conditional pardon for failure. This is the religion of most men. It is not the highest nor the deepest, but it is true. It has no delectable mountains, but

it has no valleys of despondency. It is a narrow road; it is in the main a straight one.

But, while this is a true Gospel, is it the whole Gospel? Not unless the voice of our Saviour is to reach but a part of men, and draw therefrom but a little flock. We are not all made of this even and unfermenting clay. There abounds another class, as different from these in all spiritual texture and religious character as the impulsive Greek at Pentecost was from the dignified and slow-pacing Bedouin chieftain. Let us look at these. They are passionate natures. They cannot work out their own salvation. They pray ever to be taken whither of themselves they cannot go. They are not of necessity weak of will or incompetent of self-control or unequal to the requirements of the moralities. It is sometimes they have got through all these and yet can find no peace. Duty, as men measure it, they say they have done, and still the face of God does not lift up its light. They are haunted forever by a sense of infinite failure. Their aims are away above their abilities. Obedience to law is drudgery to them, but they are easily led by faith. All their motives center about persons. Is there no Gospel for such folk? Is there no Gospel for those whom law only tantalizes? Aye, is there? To such it offers Christ, not as the teacher of a law, but as a man to be believed in and loved. This simple trust, this intense personal affection, which you, my good sir, can-

not understand—this is just the very thing they have to give. They cannot direct themselves aright, but only fix their love and you may lead them where you will. Self-discipline is impossible; they have tried that, but they cannot escape from themselves. There are those whose lives are so little self-contained, who so need to be carried out of themselves, that without it their nature runs to waste or burns away with self-consuming fires. Here, then, we have a class to whom the Gospel speaks another language. To the first it says duty, to the second it says love. One class can't do the duty, the other can't comprehend the love.

But is this all? Are there other sheep which belong to neither fold? Thus far we have had in view only the future of religion to each one—the good it brings when it is ripe. Whether we say, "Obey patiently, and you shall grow into perfect faith and love," or whether we say, "Fling yourself on faith and love, and you will find grace for perfect obedience," in either case it is the good effects of the spiritual influence we have in view, and not the pleasure of its possession. But there is yet another class. They ask, Shall no interchange of voice break the silence between God and us? Why tell us of God's almighty power and care if it only sleep round us like dead space, or, at most, watches like a sentinel of the universe, not free to stir? Who can ever pray to a motionless Immensity? Who can weep

his griefs to rest on a bosom so undemonstrative? Urged by such questions men have longed for conscious communion with God—communion both ways.

Lash your weary strength no more, they say. Your strength is to sit still. Sit low and weak upon the ground, with loving readiness and willingness, and you shall be taken through your work with a sevenfold strength that has no effort in it. So speaks this doctrine of the Spirit. Surely it is not altogether a false Gospel. It seems likely that it may come in this language to some meditative, passionless men.

What shall we say then of these three types of faith? Do you doubt their reality? Look in the next pew and each for himself may see examples of them all; not in equal proportion, however. There are scores who walk by duty, a few who walk by love, one or two ripe and hoary-headed who "walk by the Spirit." You have them here in the compass of the Holy Books—Matthew for law, Paul for faith, John for love. They have been ever since—Pelagian, Augustinian, and mystic Jesuit and Quietist; Calvinist Lutheran and Quaker; Ritualist, Churchman, and Evangelical.

The Gospel of Christ falls upon every soul, and if it produces fruit at all, brings forth the kind of fruit which that particular soil is best adapted to bear.

XXIV.

REVELATION AND MEN'S CAPACITY.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."—JOHN xvi. 12.

THERE is no more pregnant passage in Scripture than this. It contains a statement of fact, a principle, and a prophecy. Scripture always assumes that the knowledge of divine things is of the very supremest value, and that the lack of it is the greatest of all possible evils. It regards the knowledge of God very much as we regard an education. We conceive the loss of that, or the failure to attain it, to be among the direst calamities that can befall a human being. To be able "to see the Father" is the thing which Jesus laid the profoundest stress upon. "Oh! Jerusalem," He exclaims, "if thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belonged to thy peace!" He conceives human well being as dependent upon the possession of certain kind of knowledge. But it is a knowledge of a peculiar kind, and which can only be secured in a peculiar way. The machinery of education with which we are familiar is utterly impotent to furnish it.

The faculties through which one receives the ordinary education of life are not the faculties by which one becomes wise unto salvation.

It is not easy to catch the spirit of this, or, indeed, to really believe that it is true. There are two difficulties in the way. The first is the fact that the words of the Master are hard to be understood. They are not rendered any easier of comprehension by the possession of great intellectual endowments. Suppose, for example, you say to a devout cobbler and to an undevout philosopher at the same time: "Love your enemies," or "The word was made flesh." The chances are that the cobbler would understand these expressions better than the philosopher. At any rate, he is equally likely to comprehend them, and that in spite of the fact that the ideas which these two phrases connote are excessively difficult ideas.

The second reason is, we unconsciously take it for granted that we have the right to complete information with regard to divine things. We resent a half revelation. We have a feeling that we are unfairly or unjustly dealt with when God reveals His will to us in formulæ which we cannot altogether comprehend.

The text is the explanation of this difficulty: God's revelation is conditioned upon man's capacity to receive it. "There are many things," the Master says, "which I have told you; there are many which I have yet to say unto you, but

these latter ye cannot yet bear. The difficulty is not with their truth, nor with my ability to state them in terms, but it is in the limitation of your faculties." This principle is a most far-reaching one. When you open the Old Testament, for example, retaining in your minds the thought that it is a revelation from Almighty God, you are apt to be surprised and shocked when you find it apparently giving its sanction to ideas and customs which are far below our moral standards. We find it speaking, apparently, with approval of wholesale, indiscriminate judgments inflicted upon innocent women and children for the faults of their fathers or their kin. We find it, to our surprise, speaking with approval of slavery, of polygamy, of, in fact, a whole range of thoughts and actions which we unhesitatingly condemn. How shall we reconcile the fact that all these are contained in a "revelation" of God?

Jesus gives the explanation. He says: "God allowed these on account of the hardness of your father's hearts." He might have said, with equal truth, on account of their spiritual stupidity. He taught them as much and as fast as they were able to bear. He could not in the nature of the case go faster than they were able to move. When God made His final and exhaustive revelation of Himself in the person of His Son, He was still compelled to wait for the fullness of the time. Even then only a handful were able to

comprehend the light, and that, incompletely, partially, and like children. This is the guiding principle of the revelation of God in all its stages.

What I am chiefly concerned with just now, is to point out that this principle obtains in the individual religious life. The knowledge of God depends upon the capacity to receive that knowledge. There is a widespread error, which would be whimsical if it were not so fatal, that one may turn to religion at any moment when the mood seizes him, and be able at that moment to take it all in and comprehend its contents. One is reminded of the man who, when asked if he could play the violin, replied that "he never had, but he supposed he could." It is as foolish as to expect to be taught the calculus before one has experimentally learned arithmetic. There is a reasonableness and a method in religion which is inexorable. It has laws of its own, and those laws are rooted in the nature of things. This is one of them: there are such things as first principles, and one cannot go on to higher things until he has learned the rudiments.

The truth of revelation is never final. It is outpoured from the infinite reservoir of the Almighty, and that reservoir is inexhaustible. Pastor John Robinson, at Leyden, was more right than even he supposed when he ventured to point to the Bible and say: "I am persuaded that God had yet more truth to come to us,

which will break forth in time out of His Holy Word." This truth is always breaking forth out of His Holy Word. "Old things pass away and all things become new." Those who have fondly fancied that they had learned it all, are disturbed and affrighted when they are visited by some newer and additional word from on high.

Human life is thought of by our Lord as a school. The docile and obedient scholar has a thirst for knowledge, but he secures his knowledge step by step. He does not expect that he shall know everything to-day. He waits and hopes that to-morrow will have its lesson also. The impatient and stupid child, when the lesson is offered to him, says: "I don't see any use in this." Like a foolish child, instead of studying the lesson as set, he wants to lay it down and take in hand the big boys' books. The task is slow; it is not always agreeable, nor can one know the import of what he is being taught at the moment. "What I do ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter."

The sum of it all is that the knowledge of God is the supreme wisdom, but because it is a divine wisdom, it shares in the qualities of God. Men come into it little by little. As they increase in goodness they come more and more to understand the infinite goodness. As they grow in patience they come to see the divinity of Christ. As little by little they come to understand Him

the better, they begin to grow more and more like Him. The end of it is that they shall attain to the measure of the stature of men in Christ, because finally they shall be able to see Him as He is.

XXV.

THE MIND OF CHRIST.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."—PHILIPPIANS ii. 5.

CHRISTIANITY, strictly speaking, is not a "religion" at all. It refuses to take its stand side by side with the other religions of the world. The study of comparative religion concerns it but very little, and can make very little of it. It stands on a ground of its own, and is to a great extent destitute of those very qualities which constitute what is ordinarily called religion. It has little to say about the origin of man. It has no theory to propound concerning the nature of God. It has no formal statement concerning the manner of future existence. It refers to all these things, to be sure, but it takes them for granted. It does not reveal them, it does not uphold them; it simply assumes them.

Christianity is Christ's working theory of life. It runs thus: "Life," He seems to say, "is under the management of a father. It is to be passed among brothers; act accordingly. Your brother may injure you grievously, wantonly. If you return evil in kind, you intensify and perpetuate the wrong. Do not retaliate. Conquer

him with patience and bind him to yourself in the meshes of love. You may suffer thus; very probably you will. You may perish; but nevertheless not a hair of your head shall be wasted."

Thus is the summary of the situation. He practiced what He preached. He became Himself the supreme example of His method. He asserted all along that in adopting this manner of life He was acting not alone by the light of His supreme human wisdom, but that He was acting also as the immediate manifestation of God. In a word, that He was living visibly before the eyes of men as God actually exists invisibly. He renounced the rights which belonged to Him as God. He became a man, and went through the whole career of a man. He refused any exemptions for Himself. He refused to put to one side the cup of agony, refused to take it from His lips until He had drunk it to the dregs. He would not accept any favors. In looking carefully at His career, His teaching, His life, His spirit, one can see that the central element of Christianity is renunciation of rights.

Now, to the practical man this seems to be the very extremity of wrongheadedness. It moves directly in the face of the wisdom and experience of the ages. His way looks and moves precisely in the opposite direction from men's way. Will it bear the test of actual experiment? Suppose an individual seriously undertakes to conduct his life according to the spirit and letter of the life

of Christ. He will love his enemies. He will not retaliate any injury. He will take no thought for the morrow, what he shall eat, or what he shall drink, or wherewithal he shall be clothed. Can such a man live? Can he support his family? Can he be a good citizen? Or will he, in the attempt to become a god, fall below the standard of the average man? Can a corporation conduct business in this fashion? Suppose it refuse to enter into rivalries, since it seeks not the things of its own, but the things of another. Can it pay dividends? Can it maintain its existence in the community?

Or, suppose a nation were to adopt this mode of life. Not intending to resent encroachments, it disbands its army, sells its navy, discharges its police. Can it live for a single year?

Now, it must be confessed that when one faces down the manner of life which Jesus taught and illustrated, it appears to be not only impracticable, but dangerous. Dangerous not alone in a physical, but in a moral sense. For, consider how many of our own highest ideals cluster about the idea of right: the Bill of Rights, the Magna Charta, the Petition of Rights, the War for Independence. A whole circle of human ideas of the most exalted kind revolve about the central thought of self-assertion. These ideas have had much to do with the elevation of humanity and in maintaining society at the point which it has already gained. It would seem to be necessary

that these ideas should be preserved. But how shall they be reconciled with the teachings of Christ?

I reply it is true that life presents itself to us under the conditions thus briefly sketched, yet there are some strange facts that stand on the other side and point in the opposite direction. First, I ask you to notice the overwhelming successfulness of the career of Jesus Christ. Has there ever been so successful a man in the world? No other one has attracted to himself a tithe of the same attention, has gathered to himself anything like the great multitude of disciples, and to no other man have the affections of myriads of human beings fastened themselves with the same tenacity as they have to Christ. Indeed, it may be said that He and His pale shadow, the Buddha, divide between them the homage of the world. Guatama, in virtue of his renunciation under the Bo tree, lies at the heart of one-half the world. Jesus, in virtue of His renunciation of the pleasures that He had at the right hand of the Father, holds the affections of the other half. There must be something in the human heart which responds to this idea of renunciation. One-half the world is drawn to the Buddha by the mere simulation of it, and the other half is raised into the presence of God when they get sight of the reality itself.

The second thing to be noticed is, that the things most desired by men are actually not

attainable when sought as rights. Suppose in the actual conditions of life a man shall say: "I will not be guided by sentiment, I will do exact justice, and will insist upon my precise rights." What will the weapons of force or law secure for such a man? They will indeed provide for him food, and lodging, and dress, and amusements. In a word, they will furnish all these necessaries of life which can be compelled, or which can be bought, but they will be utterly impotent to provide him with the devotion of a woman, the friendship of a man, or the love of a child. Not a single one of these can be secured as a matter of right. They can only be attained by the renunciation of one's own self. People do not always realize this. Who has not seen the sad spectacle of a man claiming affection as a right, and failing to secure it?

In the third place is the strange fact that institutions sustained by force are short lived. They chase each other as breakers chase one another up the shelving shores of the sea, each one rolling in with apparently resistless power, and each breaking and receding again with ignominy. Take for example the armed nations of Europe. They are the very realization of force. But we feel instinctively that their institutions cannot permanently endure. No situation which is based upon force can abide. They must fight until sooner or later one stands supreme. It is only when force is eliminated

and what the world calls sentiment takes its place that an equilibrium of life is possible.

Is Tolstoi right, then? Have the Quakers the truth when they talk of non-resistance? I answer they are half right, but only half. Safety and content in living is found, not by passively standing still, but by an active good will which goes out of itself toward men. Is it anything better, then, than a religious phantasy? Do you mean to say that life can be conducted after that fashion? I reply, thousands have so conducted their lives. Sometimes they have come to grief, but in that case they have not repined. They have gone down serenely, and their pain and their death has made it easier for those who followed them. All the gain of life so far achieved has come to humanity through the "foolishness of the cross." The idea is as yet dim before men, to be sure, but it is the ideal toward which the world is slowly moving.

No man in Christendom is able altogether to resist its influence. It works upon him in spite of himself. Says Mr. John Fiske: "To many minds the Sermon on the Mount has been as foolishness and a stumbling block, and its ethics have been derided as too good for this world. But, through misery which has seemed unendurable, and turmoil which has seemed endless, men have thought on its sublime ideal and have taken comfort in that sweetly solemn message of 'Peace on earth, to men good will.'"

XXVI.

THY WILL BE DONE.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."—MATTHEW vi. 10.

THIS petition in the Lord's Prayer seems clearly to intimate that God's will is done in heaven, and that it is not done, or at any rate is done but imperfectly, upon earth. That it is done in the heavens is the impression that all have. If one stands under the stars of a clear night and allows the silence and majesty of the scene to sink into his soul, he is impressed with the smoothness and majesty of movement which characterizes it all. One feels that in all space and time outside of the little round ball upon which he stands, the will of God is perfectly fulfilled. When he goes into the house, however, or when the garish sun rises next morning and he goes into the street and fronts the facts of everyday life, he is impressed by the thought that God's will is not done. He begins to see that God himself is of the same opinion. There is at any rate one province in the universe which is in a state of insurrection. Within that province of humanity there is a little spot, even the man's

own heart, in which he is dismally conscious that the will of God does not prevail.

The burden of the teaching of Jesus is concerning His kingdom. He looked for a restoration. He bade His disciples pray for the execution of God's will in the affairs of man. He knew that what men pray for they work for. He bade them co-operate with Him in bringing spiritual harmony into a condition of living which is full of moral confusion. But He also declares that this execution of God's will cannot be brought about by force. There are some things that even God cannot do. He points out that the restoration of this harmony is contingent upon human action and human will. God cannot play the despot in the spiritual realm in a universe where human affections are, in the nature of the case. God can only solicit and entreat; He cannot compel. It is as inconceivable to have an affection coerced as it is to have two and two make five. This is the very ground and explanation of the incarnation itself. God cannot force man's affections; therefore He incarnates Himself and becomes a man in order that He may win their love. The work of Jesus, then, is to bring man to a better mind.

Now, we may as well confess that our interest in His programme is languid. We use this petition, of course, when we say the Lord's Prayer, but we do not lay the emphasis upon it which we do upon its companion petition, "Give us

this day our daily bread." We are deterred by a feeling of antecedent hopelessness. The world is so bad. Injustice and confusion, greed, selfishness, and indifference are so widespread and rampant, that it seems but an idle dream to think of this world ever moving with the same moral smoothness and divine harmony which should obtain in the kingdom of heaven. We despair even of securing the will of God within an area the size of one's own city. If one looks forward no further than a year, he is apt to think that there is more likelihood of the will of a street railway company being carried into effect than of the will of God.

Out of this has always sprung the temptation to accept evil as incurable, and to adjust one's self toward the fact of its existence as best he may. Strangely enough this petition, which is the prayer put in the mouth of soldiers about to enter an engagement, has come to be thought of as the petition peculiarly suited to the mourner sitting hopeless over a newly filled grave! "Thy will be done" has come to be the formula of resignation, instead of a battle cry. Is it worth while really to hope that God's will will ever be done in this world?

The early apostles themselves doubted it. They looked for an immediate coming of their Lord and for the quick destruction of the earth. Their imaginations were not strong enough to fancy the great empire of evil, which confronted

them, subdued to God and moving in obedience to His will. In the Middle Ages Christian men and women despaired of God's will ever being done where men congregated, and so they fled into the desert, the wilderness, shut themselves up in walls, buried themselves in caves, climbed to the top of pillars, each one trying within the little area of his own life to subordinate himself to the will of God, because he despaired of the world ever coming to the same mind. In modern times popular Christianity has thought of Christ's redemption not so much as a process which will conquer the earth, as a device whereby an individual here and there may be snatched out of a perishing world and landed safely in heaven. It conceives of humanity as the company of a shipwrecked vessel struggling in the midst of confusing seas, and of the Redeemer saving a few, while the majority are left to perish.

Over against this, however, is the magnificent hopefulness of the Holy Scriptures. At the very dawn they looked forward through the day even to the evening, and declared that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." "If I be lifted up," says the Master, "I will draw all men to me." When the seer at Patmos saw the radiant woman coming down from heaven, and the man child born upon the earth, and the great dragon pouring out a flood to overwhelm him, John declares that the earth itself

opened its great lips and swallowed up the flood. I think that we of to-day are coming, in our own time, to see this more clearly. The idea which has found the deepest lodgment in the contemporary mind is the idea of development. One cannot pronounce that word without having awakened in his mind the idea of increasing goodness. The Archbishop of Canterbury has been bold enough, within a few years, to declare that even within the darkness of pagan religion God has been working and is still working, and that even the religions themselves have been subsidized by Him to aid in bringing in His kingdom.

The effect of this idea upon actual life is incalculable. It inspires the individual with hope. It draws him out of his isolation. It makes him willing to co-operate with his fellowmen in bringing about betterment in every condition of life. It emboldens him to stand in the presence of a battery of evils, however ancient they may be, however intrenched they may be, and to attack them courageously, because he is persuaded that they are contrary to the will of God, and because he is persuaded that the will of God will ultimately prevail. If the idea should obtain more largely than it even now does—that is to say, if Christian men and women once get lodged within them the thought that they are co-operating with God to bring in a kingdom of righteousness—their efforts toward

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good would be no longer mere guerrilla warfare or selfish attempts to save one's self, but would come to be co-ordinated into a great and powerful movement, which would mightily forward and speedily bring in the rule of God.

XXVII.

A LIAISON WITH THE WORLD.

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God."—JAMES iv. 4.

IF this be true it is most unfortunate. For one has to live in this world, whether he is on friendly terms with God or not. As to the world, he must eat with it, sleep with it, buy with it, sell with it, and spend his life in it. If it be necessary that he must choose between it and the Almighty, making one of them his friend and the other his enemy, it would seem that the conditions of life are hopeless from the outset. This makes it worth while to inquire, "What should be the attitude of a loyal and intelligent Christian toward the world?"

Now, how to deal with this is a question which arose at the very beginning of the Christian Church. It was probably more sharply accentuated then than it has ever been since. The first Christians were Jews or pagans before they became Christians. When they accepted Christ's ideas about God, it threw them at once out of friendly relation with their environment.

The Christian of to-day, of course, is free from many of the entanglements which his ancestors faced. He lives in a world which has actually become to a large extent Christian. Nevertheless, it still contains within it great areas wherein God is not allowed, or, if so, is regarded as a hostile interloper. To be more specific, the Christian has to do every day of his life with profane men, with unclean men, with dishonest men. If he be in business there are methods of procedure which are distinctly contrary to the spirit of life which his Master enjoins. If he be in politics it is needless to say that he is called upon to act in ways of which his Christian conscience does not approve. If he amuses himself, he is in the midst of diversions which are, in many cases at least, questionable. The same thing is true when he moves in society. It is true even if he withdraw into the abstract and comparatively clear atmosphere of the arts or the pure sciences. If these things were unequivocally bad, the question would be very simple. But this, fortunately or unfortunately,—fortunately for actual life and unfortunately for logic,—is not the case. The profane man, for example, is often most generous and hospitable. The unclean man may be, and often is, scrupulously honest. However he may spend his nights, one does not hesitate to trust him by day. The dishonest man may be on his intellectual side, like Lord Bacon, one of the most

effective and uplifting of men. In business, while there are many things with which a Christion cannot be on friendly terms, there is, nevertheless, much of the highest trust and purest honor. So of society, science, politics, and all the rest. Now, is there any clew in so crooked a path? How shall one bear himself toward a world like this?

There have been two answers given which theoretically are good enough, but practically are not workable. The first is what has been called the method of "spiritual direction." It says in effect to the individual Christian: "The conduct of your religious life, in a world like this, is a very perplexing and complicated affair. You are not competent to manage it by yourself. You should put it into the hands of an expert. You should go periodically to a confessor or a spiritual director, and he will instruct you specifically from time to time as to the things which you should do and the things which you should avoid. Trust the management of your life to him, and the institution which he represents will guarantee your eternal well-being." The trouble with this is that where it is honestly accepted, it reduces the individual to an automaton and keeps him forever a child. It works badly in practice.

The second rule is the one which long ago was adopted by the Puritans. It finds its expression in the phrase: "Come out therefrom and be ye

separate." It looks upon the world practically as the house and home of the devil. One should flee from it into the Church if he can; if he cannot do that, then into the wilderness, but flee from it he must. This method is distinctly contrary to the direction which our Lord left to his disciples when about to leave them. "I pray not," he said, "that you should be taken out of the world, but that you should be kept from the evil."

Neither of the above methods will work. But will anything else? I venture to suggest two general principles, which, if they are incorporated into the conscience and the understanding, will serve for at least general sailing directions.

The first is, we dare not approve the things that God condemns. The practical danger in life is in assuming that there is an ideal code of righteousness which God requires, but which is practically impossible. We therefore substitute for it a lower ideal, which we confess is not so good, but which can be put in practice. Our Lord, for example, defines the sin of adultery, "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her." That standard is too high for the average man. He fixes upon a lower, but what he regards as a practicable, one. The Master fixes a standard of honesty: "Thou shalt not covet." We substitute for it a lower one. He fixes the ideal of truth-

fulness and purity and generosity. We look at them and admire them, but dismiss them as impossible, and put in their place lower, but more workable, ones. This is the fundamental error. Men really live by their ideals. The instant they begin to conform their ideal holiness to their practical attainment, they start upon a downward course, and there is no place to stop until they reach the bottom. One must hold steadfastly before him the ideals which God sets.

The second principle is one equally important, but one which is likely to be forgotten; we dare not condemn the things which God does not condemn. The religious world has more than once fallen into the error of pronouncing unpardonable, things which God regards as indifferent, or at least not intrinsically wrong. We can all recall instances where the Church has set its ban upon beliefs, practices, and amusements, sweeping them all together into one comprehensive condemnation, whereas they are things which God does not so dismiss from His presence.

With these two principles in mind, let us examine a single word of our text upon which the whole discussion turns. It is the word "friendship." We may congratulate ourselves that there is no term in the English language by which we can literally translate the term used in the original. "Friendship" with the world, we call it. The French would call it *une liaison*. It is the

illicit friendship of the married wife for a man who is not her husband. The Church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Her husband is not exacting or jealous of any innocent affection, but he condemns unsparingly and without relief her illicit affection for the world.

XXVIII.

RESTORE SUCH AN ONE.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."—GALATIANS vi. 1-2.

THERE are three principles evidently deducible from this text: that sin is not always premeditated—we may be overtaken and overthrown by a sin as by a robber; that a sinner is always capable of restoration to purity; and that it rests with his brethren to help him to effect this restoration. It would be a blessed thing for our Christian society if we could look upon sin and sinners as Christ did. We are prone to go to one of two extremes. We either look upon the sinner as hopeless, or look upon the sin as trivial. The divine character of the New Testament is in no way more evident than in the stable ground from which it views this matter.

It says, never retracting nor modifying, "the wages of sin is death." It speaks the truth sternly and with no weak sentiment. But then it looks for every excuse, admits every pallia-

tion. It accepts the existence of sin as a fact, without affecting to be shocked or startled—looks upon it as a disease which should be, and which can be, cured.

The Apostle speaks of some sins as the result of a surprise—"if a man be overtaken by a fault." All sins are not of this character, nor does he say so; but some are. It seems as if it were not in us to commit them. We loathe the thought of them, and generally they are no temptation to us. They are, so to speak, unnatural to us. You were going along quietly on your way, thinking no evil, when suddenly a temptation for which you were not prepared presented itself, and before you knew where you were, you were crying over your fault. It is unpleasant to think this—that we walk so insecurely; yet anyone who knows humanity knows that it is true, that it may befall even a brave man and a true. Everyone, if he thinks a moment, will recognize the truth of this in his own life.

Again, the Apostle looks upon sin not as something which has come and gone again, and left no mark. He sees in it a thing that leaves a burden on the soul. One burden is that chain of entanglement which seems to drag us down to fresh sins. The punishment of sin is sin! The penalty of a crime is that it leads to the commission of another. The soul gravitates downward under its burden, It was a profound knowledge which foretold Peter's sin. He did

not say, "Thou shalt deny me," that would have been simple enough; but He says, "Thou shalt deny me thrice,"—thrice; he could not stop at once. The distress of the soul does not depend upon the magnitude of the fault. It depends on the soul itself. What would be a most conspicuous blot on the fair white page would be undistinguishable on the smeared blotter. Every soul bears its own sin, and the remembrance of a lie is more intolerable to one than the remembrance of murder to another. But the memory of sin is what hurts. Many a spirit which might have climbed the heights of holiness, and breathed the rare and difficult air of the mountain-top, where none but the purest spirituality can dwell, is weighted down by such a burden to the level of the lowest. Every aspiration of such a one, every longing after holiness, is met and stifled by the remembrance. We meet such often, men and women whose whole lives are spent in doing deeds of charity and love in secret and in darkness, lest their outward acts of goodness should seem inconsistent with their inward memory of sin.

Our Lord went through the world detecting the presence of evil by the innate purity of His nature. Men, supposed spotless, fell down before Him, crying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." This, in a lower degree, is true of all innocence. Men grown gray in guilt restrain their hands and tongues before a man they

know to be honest and pure. Fallen women have been rescued from their infamy, over and over again, by the love for an innocent child. But guilt also detects guilt by the instinctive consciousness of similarity. The soul knows its own nakedness, but it knows also the nakedness of other souls who have sinned in like manner. There is a freemasonry of sin. But the Apostle speaks of a restoration which is to be by us effected for one another. Restoration is possible. This is a Christian fact. Moralists have taught us what sin is, how it entwines itself into habit. They have shown us its ineffaceable character, but it was reserved for Christianity to speak of restoration. Christ, and Christ only, has made it believed that he who has erred may be made pure and clean and whole again. This renovation is to be effected by men. "Brethren, restore such an one."

Now, how can this be done? Our text confines us to two modes: By sympathy; and by forgiveness. By sympathy—not any maudlin, sickly sentiment, but a sympathy which can take a poor, fallen, repulsive sinner by the hand and help him. We Protestants have an unwarranted sneer ready for the confessional. Men confess, we say, for the sake of absolution, that, being absolved, they may sin again. But such is not the truth. The system of the confessional is built on something infinitely more profound than that. It is not the desire to sin again that makes men long to unburden their consciences; it is the

yearning to be true which lies at the bottom, even of the most depraved hearts, to appear what they are and to lead a false life no longer. Besides this, it is the desire of sympathy; it wants some other human heart to feel what it feels. Thousands upon thousands of laden souls around us are crying, "Come and bear my burden with me." But why should the priest's heart alone be the common receptacle of all the crimes and wickedness of a congregation? "Bear ye one another's burdens."

Again, this restoration comes by forgiveness. There is a truth in the doctrine of absolution. Man may forgive sins! The mercifulness of one good man's voice sounds like a decree of pardon from Heaven, and the condemnation of men sounds like a knell on the soul, binding it to sin. The restoring power of forgiveness, the degrading power of severity, is vested in the Christian community, the voice of the minister being but the expression of their judgment. Restoration is the essential work of our Christianity. To save men's souls from sin is every good man's work. Suppose a man is overtaken by temptation and sins. Shall he keep it to himself all his life long, and be before God and man false? Shall he confess it to his brother, and thus lift the burden from off his own soul? Ay, but how does he know who is his brother? Is it certain that from those who bear the peculiar relation of "brethren" he will get the forgiveness and sympathy

which leads to his restoration? Can a man in doctrinal doubt go to the members of his own religious sect to have it resolved? Are they not the very ones who will frown upon his doubts and reveal his sins? Will a clergyman unbosom his mind to his brethren in the ministry? Are they not in their official rigor the least capable of understanding him? If a woman be overtaken by sin, will she tell of it to a sister woman? Or, does she not feel instinctively that in her own sex she will find the sternest and most merciless judge?

It ought not to be true, but I am afraid it is, that we, by our want of sympathy and unmerciful behavior, by the un-Christ-like way in which we break down the bridge behind the penitent one, keep many a man in sin. If we know ourselves for what we are,—poor, weak sinners, struggling for light and strength,—we will be ready to lend a helping hand to our brother or sister who may be no more weak, but only more tempted than ourselves.

XXIX.

SENDING THEIR REGRETS.

"They all . . . began to make excuse."—Luke xiv. 18.

It is not necessary to rehearse more than in outline the parable of the Great Supper. Our Lord says: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king who made a supper and invited many guests. When the supper was ready and served he sent his servants to remind the guests that they should come to table. Whereupon with one consent they all began to make excuse. One said, 'I have bought a farm and I must go and examine it.' Another said, 'I have invested in five yoke of oxen and I must go and look at them.' Another said, 'I have married a wife and of course I cannot come.'"

The first thing to be noticed is the formal politeness of the people who had been bidden and who declined to co[illegible]e. They were not rude. They sent their regrets. They fulfilled all the requirements of courtesy. The second thing to be noticed is that the excuses were only excuses, and not reasons. There does not seem to have been any expectation on their part that the

explanations which they sent would be taken as *bona fide* explanations. They were mere pretexts. It appears on the surface of the parable that the real reason why they stayed away was because they did not wish to go. It was not due to rudeness nor to hostility, but to indifference and preoccupation.

This brings us face to face with our subject. The standing obstacle in the way of religion is not disbelief nor enmity against God, but distaste for the things of religion, and preoccupation with the things of life. It is to be noticed also that by the terms of the parable it is not preoccupation with bad things. There is nothing evil about a farm or a yoke of oxen, nor, of necessity, about a wife. None of these things make one deny God or be insolent to Him. At their worst they simply make one indifferent, and take away the zest for the activities of religion and for intercourse with God. In arranging the programme for a day's activities, for example, or for the work of a season, one takes account of almost everything except provision for his religious necessities. When a parent is arranging a scheme for his child's education, and the plan of his child's life, he equips him as far as he is able with all the provision which is necessary to make him successful in the world, but he does not as a rule spend a great deal of time or money or thought upon those things which will fit the child to live on friendly terms with God.

But, it is objected by the practical man, this is all that is really possible. Your way of speaking of religion as a feast is not true to the facts. You may call it a necessity, if you will; you may insist upon it as a duty, as much as you will; but we would prefer that you should be honest and not speak of it as a festivity. We will go to church as we will go to the routine of a training school, but do not ask us to go in the same mood in which a hungry man goes to a banquet. There is much of truth in this objection. Indeed, it is altogether true. Religion is disagreeable to many. Our Lord was described long ago as "a dry root out of a barren soil, without form or comeliness that men should desire him." It is difficult for us to sympathize heartily with the rhapsodies of the Psalmist. He declares that he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the spacious tents of the wicked. We are not so sure about that. If the tents are sufficiently spacious and well furnished, and the table and the music well equipped, we possibly would find more pleasure in that surrounding than we would by playing sexton at the door of a church.

This is true. But while in our sober moments we lament it, we are satisfied in the bottom of our hearts that it ought not to be true. There is something in the soul of every sane man which responds to the invitation of the Great King. It compels him at least to reply to that

invitation courteously, and deters him from saying boldly that he has no taste for the feast which is spread. Now, why cannot duty and inclination be brought to harmonize? If the things of God be those things which the secret soul delights in, why cannot the everyday soul be brought to possess the same palate which is possessed by the inmost nature? We reply they can be brought into harmony, but not without serious effort. It is not at all that an intentionally wicked man is hostile to his Father in heaven; it is that the tenants of the kingdom can become so engrossed with the activities of their holding, that they fall out of intimate relationship with the King himself.

The thing to be deplored is the loss of spiritual sensibility, the elimination of religious taste. For illustration: A young man with a longing for travel and a taste for art sets about the task of accumulating a fortune, with the intention of ultimately gratifying those longings. His business, when he begins, is a torture, but he holds to it for the sake of the use to which he means to apply his fortune when he shall have secured it. Years afterward he has become rich. He is able to retire. But he discovers to his consternation that his early tastes are all gone. His sordid habits have created within him a sordid soul. The farm, the oxen, the domestic exigencies have these dangerous possibilities, that they destroy, or at least render less sensitive, the

religious faculties. Religion has a language of its own. It has its own customs, its own demands, its own range of activities. Long-continued neglect of them results, first, in indifference, then in incapacity, and, if pursued far enough, ends in hostility.

It is a repeated teaching of the Master that in order to go into the secrets of God there is necessary a loosening of hold upon the things of life. It is not necessary that one should turn upon them or revile them or pronounce them bad, but he must "use them as not abusing them." To come into practical religion an act of will is necessary. People do not realize ordinarily how strenuous this act of will must be. Our Lord uses the most emphatic terms. "Strive," He says. The word is even more emphatic than that, it is "Agonize to enter in at the strait gate." The gate is strait. It is so difficult of entrance, and the opposite path is so easy of entrance, that if one really cares to effect an entrance into the kingdom of heaven he must take its gates by storm.

Finally, notice in this parable the way in which it illuminates the character and habit of the Host Himself. His hospitality is exhaustless. From His infinite yearning flows out the invitation not only to the guests originally bidden, but to those who toil along the highways and crouch behind the hedges. But His dignity is equal to His hospitality. He presses no man beyond the

man's own will. He accepts the "regrets" in the same spirit in which they are offered. If any man does not care to come, he need not. He is allowed to go his own way, and his place is filled. We wish we could shake loose the secret of God's final intent as to that great mass of humanity who find nothing attractive in the feast that He spreads. Shall they pass through the whole range of their existence estranged from God? Or will it be that, either in this stage or in some other, they shall be driven by their constantly increasing soul hunger to satisfy themselves at the feast of God? The answer to this question is not yet available, but one thing is clear from this and from all the teaching of the New Testament, that the desire of the Father in heaven is expressed in "My son, give me thine heart."

XXX.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

"Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—ROMANS v. 7, 8.

THE real difficulty in the way of God's holding friendly feelings to men would seem to be not so much their wickedness as their distastefulness. It is easier, as a rule, to love a wicked thing than a disgusting thing. When one sees humanity in a mass, the thing which is apt to impress him is its excessive unloveliness. God's affection for man has stood this, the most difficult of all tests. Following God's way as far as may be, how ought the Christian to regard the evil that is in the world? How should a Christ-like man think and act toward wicked men and women? Of course, I assume that he does not set himself on any vantage ground of self-righteousness, from which he might regard himself as separate from the rest, but bearing in mind that he wishes to be like God, and at the same time that he lives among men, how shall he bear himself toward the evil?

Here is the answer: He should follow in the path of Christ, as Christ followed in the path of

God. Jesus' path is very plain. His incarnation was simply the expression in time and space of God's eternal and infinite yearning toward His children. The salient point of Christ's character was His pitifulness. But it is to be noticed that it was pity for sin rather than pity for suffering. One should not miss the fact that His miracles of healing, and feeding the hungry, were incidental. He never regarded them as His chief work. He passed away from them to something else the instant He was able. His physical deeds of might were few, His moral miracles of healing were continuous. The sinner had an infinite attraction for Him as a sinner.

Now, it is not easy to imitate Him here. Two things are easy. The one is to have one's pity melted at the sight of suffering; the other is to blaze out in indignation at the sight of wrong being done. It is much easier, for instance, to pity *Antonio*, the easy-going fool who thoughtlessly imperiled a pound of his own flesh for no higher purpose than to furnish gewgaws for a feather-headed spendthrift, than to follow the mind of the poet, and give one's sympathy to *Shylock*. But *Shylock* it is who merits the pity. He was to be pitied because he was devoured by his own greed. He was to be pitied because he was outraged, despoiled of his goods, of the love of his daughter, the only pledge of his lost *Leah;* because he was blind and raging with anguish; because he was devouring his own soul.

When one sees a brutal, poverty-stricken mother beating her helpless child, one's indignation blazes out at the mother, and the pity goes out toward the child. Christ, however, would probably have judged in both cases differently. His pity would have gone to *Shylock*, who was the sinner, rather than to *Antonio*, who was the fool. It would have gone to the brutal mother, who was storing up for herself anguish for the years to come, rather than to the child, whose sufferings were physical and would be forgotten in an hour.

Again, it is easy to pity a whole class of offenders, any individual of whom would fill us with indignation and loathing. Many a man and woman is active in prison reform associations, Magdalene societies, in enterprises of all sorts which have for their object the betterment of a whole class of individuals, who would find it excessively difficult to enter into Christ's feeling toward the individuals which constitute the very class they are trying to benefit.

But the difficulties are to be overcome; they are not to be regarded as final. The path of the Christian is not hard to see, however difficult it is to be walked in. "To be grieved and worried with the burden of one's own sins" is only the starting place of a Christian pilgrimage. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou

also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Bear one another's burdens. The burdens here spoken of are moral burdens. The injunction is not primarily to lift off one's fellow the load of his poverty or the load of his pain, but, as far as may be, to lift from him the load of his sin and to lighten it by taking part of it upon one's own emotions. It is vastly easy to fall into cant here—"Hate the sin and love the sinner," "Deal gently with the erring" and such commonplaces. These may be the expressions of a divine impulse, but they may also be the veriest rot. It is possible to hate the sin and to love the sinner, but it is not by any means the easy thing to do which the fat-witted moralist imagines. One must preserve his power to make moral discriminations. If he lose his capacity to recognize evil when he sees it, and fall into the way of thinking that there is, after all, but little difference between good and evil, he has diverged entirely from the pathway of Christ.

Bearing in mind this, then, how shall one act in the premises? The commonest method probably is to cast the sinner out of one's life altogether. He has been condemned by public opinion. She has been placed under the ban. What shall we do? We have his name quietly removed from the club books. We strike her name from our visiting list. So far as we have the power we cast him or her into outer darkness.

That is to say, we imitate the action of Christ sitting upon His judgment throne, rather than the action of Jesus going up and down doing good. It may be right to do so. There are cases where the condemnation of the Christian must be visited upon the sin and the sinner together. In these cases they are so bound together that there is no possibility of separating them. But such cases are rare, and, when they do occur, should be dealt with with the utmost charity.

The way of Jesus is the way of the physician. The doctor knows no disgusts. He sees and handles and experiences things from which the layman shrinks with horror. His instinct of healing overcomes his sensibility. "Let the same mind be in you, therefore, which was also in Christ." In another degree, of course, but "be ye like minded with Him." As one comes into His spirit, little by little he becomes capable of dealing with the evil which is in the world. In the same degree that he comes into this spirit, the instinct of the sinner comes to recognize in him a friend to his person, while he is at the same time the stern judge of his sin. This divine combination of moral pity and moral indignation is the thing which has attracted the generations to the Master. It will also attract the individuals of each generation to the disciple, in proportion as he shows that the same mind is in him which was also in Christ.

XXXI.

SOME FELL AMONG THORNS.

"That which fell among thorns, are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."—LUKE viii. 14.

THE biographer says that people from every city went out to hear Him. He sat in an elevated place and overlooked the crowd. His mind seems to have dwelt upon the thought: How will my teaching operate upon this mass of people? He thought of His teaching constantly as seed, but in the present instance he concerned himself not so much with the nature of the seed itself as with that of the soil upon which it should fall. Out of this thought arose the Parable of the Sower. This good seed scattered broadcast fell in all sorts of places and conditions. What would the harvest be? He recognized that the outcome would depend largely upon the soil itself. However good the seed might be, the nature of the ground had still to be considered. He saw then at the outset that much of his work would be thrown away altogether. Some fell upon the wayside. The seed found no lodgment. The birds of the

air gathered it up. Much of it fell upon rock and the sun shriveled it. Some of it again fell upon soil which was good enough, but there was not enough of it. He clearly recognized that His truth, like the goodness of God, would be in great part wasted.

But there is a special set of conditions with which He dealt more at length, and it is to those which I would direct your attention. Some of it would fall among thorns. The soil out of which thorns grow is as a rule good soil. There is no better ground for religion than that from which springs the cares and riches and pleasures of life, but the difficulty is, the soil is pre-empted. Leaving metaphor, the average nature of man is such that the religion of Christ strikes root in it. It is never altogether eradicated, but it comes to no determinate result. It does not perish, but it is choked. It does not die, but it does not produce. It takes its chances with the other activities of life, and does the best it can. Now, the Master sketches here the three great rivals with which religion is compelled to strive in the average man's life. The first of these he calls by the word "cares." I suppose that that means, in the rough, the struggle for existence. Most men are compelled to care. They must earn their livelihood; they must sustain their bodies; they must furnish food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their families; they must go to their business. These cares of necessity are most

exacting. They absorb the thought; they take time and attention; they withdraw the time and attention which, if one had leisure, might possibly be devoted to the cultivation of the soul. But they not only withdraw the energy temporarily from the affairs of the soul, they fix a habit which renders it difficult for the things of religion to secure attention. It is difficult, indeed, for a man to work energetically for many years without becoming modified in his character by the work which he does. The struggle for existence is very hard, and it seems to be growing harder year by year. There would seem to be less time and energy available for the important, but somewhat remote, necessities of the soul.

The second obstacle he characterizes as "riches." This is quite a different thing from cares. The disastrous effect of riches upon the soul is as a rule not manifest until one has passed through the period of work and secured a fortune. Nor is it easy to define what riches mean. What is a rich man? It is hard to say. The phrase is relative. It cannot be settled by fixing a definite sum. Nevertheless, the temptations of riches are very peculiar. They are easily distinguished from all other sorts of temptations. It is not easy to fix the exact point at which the struggle for livelihood passes into a struggle for accumulation for the mere sake of accumulation, but it does pass this point in thousands of instances. When it does so its

evil effect begins to show itself upon the soul. Our Lord was entirely right when He spoke of the difficulty with which a rich man enters into the kingdom of Heaven. The reason is that the mode of action which characterizes wealth is almost the reverse of that mode which obtains in the kingdom of God. The rich man is of necessity a solitary man. He is compelled to hold himself aloof from the mass of his fellows. When he is poor or in moderate circumstances he meets multitudes of men on an equality; he touches them every day, almost every hour of his life. But as he becomes rich and richer, and richer, little by little he withdraws from the multitude of his companions and finds his associates to be constantly growing fewer in number, and they almost entirely composed of men situated as he is himself. If he pass even these in the accumulation of wealth, the time comes when he stands absolutely alone. But in proportion as a man either withdraws within himself, or is driven in upon himself, he loses the capacity to understand or be moved by the spirit of Christ. It is the isolation of the rich man, quite as much as his luxury, which renders it difficult for him to enter into the kingdom of God.

The third thing which the Master refers to He calls the "pleasures of this world." No one who understands Him at all would accuse Him of being the enemy of pleasure. But He insists that pleasure should have its root in high and

noble things. That it should satisfy its longings with things which purify while they please. The pleasures of this world, according to His way of thinking, are pleasures which have not only their root but their fruit in this world. They go nowhere, produce no good result, bring no good fruit. There are thousands of such pleasures. Everybody enjoys them, but no man's soul thrives by them.

Now, in the face of all this, it is objected: "It is all inevitable. If the soil of humanity is not well adapted to the seed of God, still it is the soil which God himself has made. It is as it is, and the Lord has made it so. We are as we are, and the whole arrangement is not one of our making, nor, indeed, of our choice, but it is one in which we are set and from which we cannot escape, and, therefore, the one which we must accept. It is idle to complain that a poor man is devoured with cares. He must be devoured with cares. Life for him is hard. The hunger of the body recurs every twelve hours at least. The hunger of the soul, on the other hand, may be postponed. One must be clad in garments to keep from freezing, but the garment of righteousness can wait. Pleasure is also legitimate. The soul craves it. Life cannot exist without it. For most men the materials which satisfy it are to be found in this world, and are to be found nowhere else." To these objections I reply: All this is granted. If it were not so the parable would

have no meaning. Our Lord's appeal here, as usual, is to the inner spiritual consciousness of man, which feels dissatisfaction with itself and with its condition even at the time when it is intellectually helpless. The sober judgment declares clearly that that inward craving is reasonable. It recognizes the obligation of the kingdom of Heaven. Every man feels that it is a paramount obligation. There is no man who would deny that it would be better for the world to be good than for the world to be happy; that it would be better for them, if need be, to starve than to sin; that it would be better to live a colorless life, without enjoyment, than to live a life rich in satisfaction, but which ends in itself. The conflict is with two antagonistic elements in every man's nature.

The parable simply points out why it is that we thus lead feeble lives. It is because we strive after opposite ideals. If this parable were the whole of the teaching of the Master, it would add but little to the illumination of human life, but it is only a part of a great and complete truth. He points out that the process of relief is by the cultivation of the soil. This cultivation is a painful process. It means the uprooting of the thorns which rob it of its juices and strangle the seed of good. If one would cultivate his soul he must be ready to dig and plow, and scratch his hands, and burn many of the products which he has been accustomed to count valuable. One

can see the world as it now is for himself. If he be satisfied with it of course he can let it alone, but if his spiritual imagination is sufficiently vivid to see and be attracted by the spectacle of the same soil bearing not thorns, but golden grain, he will be willing to pass through a painful period of digging and burning and waiting for the grain to ripen.

XXXII.

THE QUESTION OF TEMPERANCE.

"John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber."—LUKE vii. 33, 34.

WHAT has the Church to say concerning the matter of temperance? From the pulpit, of course, one speaks not as a publicist or as a reformer, but as a pastor to Christian people. I would like to state briefly what I believe Christ and His Church to teach His people concerning their duty in this matter. It would be a waste of time to dwell very long upon a statement of the evils produced by drunkenness. Everybody knows them, and everybody deplores them. The waste of substance, the disease, crime, poverty, distress of mind, body, and estate which is caused by this evil is incalculable. Everybody knows that. In the face of this situation what shall the pulpit say to the people as to their duty? There is a very short and easy answer. It is one which is frequently given. It is contained in two words, "Total abstinence."

There is very grave danger in laying upon the Bible a burden which it cannot bear. The Bible will not take upon itself the responsibility of teaching total abstinence. I am quite alive to the fact that right at this point some will use their liberty as a cloak for maliciousness, and others will be offended and walk no more with us. This is unfortunate, but it is no new misfortune. There have been unreasonable people in the world for many generations. They were not satisfied with John the Baptist's course, and declared that he had a devil because he was a total abstainer. Then they turned upon his Master and called Him a glutton and a wine-bibber because He was not a total abstainer. The business of the pulpit is not to please any class, but to state the truth of God.

Now, what is the attitude of the Scripture toward the vice of drunkenness? It is to be noted in the first place that it was a vice perfectly well known to the writers of the New Testament, and one which came under the eye of the Master during His life. Horace and Plautus and Terence and Plutarch and Martial, all alike, treated this vice in a fashion which shows that it was so common that it was scarcely regarded as a vice at all. So, if the New Testament Scriptures fail to say with regard to it what some would wish they had said, it is not because they were not familiar with the facts, or because the facts were less flagrant in their day than in ours.

In the second place, it is to be noticed that the Scriptures class drunkenness with other sins, and refuse to put it in a category by itself. Current custom to-day, unfortunately, takes a very different attitude. It singles out this particular sin as though it were something exceptional—exceptional either in the irresistible quality of its temptation, or exceptional in the fact that it is not really as mortal an offense as the others alongside which it is named. There are a dozen euphemisms for being drunk. Every other sin is called by its own name; it is not disguised by some gentler term. Theft is theft, lying is lying, and adultery is adultery; but in common speech there are a dozen terms for being drunk, which do not altogether convey the idea that a man who gets drunk is guilty of a moral fault. The Scriptures never make this mistake. They call the evil by its right name, and class it with other sins for which the sinner himself is responsible. The popular way of dealing with this produces two evils. In the first place, it breaks down the moral resistance of the person who is tempted, if it is intimated to him that he is a "poor victim of drink," especially if it is intimated that he is the unfortunate possessor of an inherited appetite. He very quickly takes the kind-hearted but foolish reformer at his word, and regards himself as a victim rather than a sinner. In the second place, popular speech directs the public indignation against the wrong party. If one

tithe of the public abuse which is addressed to the rum-seller were brought to bear upon the rum-drinker, the evil, if not eradicated, would be greatly lessened. For, after all, the man who sells the rum is not the criminal. At most he is only an accessory before the fact. We do not pity the man who commits burglary, and fine and imprison the man who sells him the jimmy. It would be just as wise to do so, as to pity the fellow who gets drunk and fine the saloon-keeper who sells him the liquor. If public opinion could be so revolutionized that for a period of six months it would treat the man who gets drunk as it does to-day the thief or the sodomite, drunkards would come to be very scarce.

What does Christianity provide in the way of incentive or in the way of restraint? The chief thing is the simple teaching of the New Testament as to the value, the destiny, and sanctity of the human body. It says to every follower of Christ, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost." If you abuse it you commit not only a physical fault, but an offense which is in its nature sacrilege. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Your bodies are members of Christ.

When we part from the Christian teaching concerning the sanctity of the body, it would be hard to establish any moral ground against either drunkenness or suicide. Besides this, however, it adds "a counsel of perfection" to what is a

universal rule. It says to the individual Christian: "Your liberty in this matter ought not to be interfered with. So far as the Church is concerned it shall not be interfered with. The Church counsels for you temperance—that is, self-control. But at the same time it advises you that, if in any case you are persuaded that giving up your own liberty will clearly benefit another man, you ought to sacrifice it without hesitation. But then it says: "You must yourself be the judge as to whether the sacrifice of your liberty will help another man. You must be the judge. You must not allow the conscience of your weak brother to judge for you. His conscience may be as weak as his pity is strong."

Still further, the Master provides the Church as an institution wherein the weak are to be kept up to the standard by the counsel, example, and moral stimulus of those who are stronger. He furnishes the sacraments of the Church, the divine channels of the Holy Spirit, as the means whereby additional strength is vouchsafed to the wills of tempted men. Probably no two men ever lived whose opinions upon the matter are of more value than those of Father Mathew and John B. Gough. They both declared over and over again that recovery from the habit of drunkenness is scarcely to be looked for or expected apart from religion and religious institutions. Father Mathew led his reformed drunkards to the chancel rail, and had them take the vow of temper-

ance before the altar. Mr. Gough tried to awaken in each a profound, conscious, religious experience. Both alike fastened the idea of reform to the idea of religion. Only thus, they both declared, was it likely to be safe and to work out good results.

But the thing with which I am concerned just now is not primarily the best method of reforming drunkards, but to ascertain and state what is the law for the ordinary Christian as to the use of drink. There can be no better and shorter formula devised than to say: In this, as in all things else, he should follow the example of his Master, Christ. It will be enough if he follow in His footsteps. It will not be necessary and will hardly be safe for him to try to go beyond or improve upon either the teaching or the practice of Jesus.

XXXIII.

THE GOSPEL FOR THE POOR.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John those things which ye see: . . . the poor have the gospel preached unto them."—MATTHEW xi. 4, 5.

JOHN THE BAPTIST, lying in the dungeon of a wretched prison and pondering upon the cause which had brought him there, begins to question either the power or the good will of his master, Christ. Thereupon he sends messengers to say to Him: "If You are, indeed, all that I have supposed, what of me? Have You forgotten me? or is the programme which You announced, and which I have been the first to attempt to carry into effect, an impossible programme?" Jesus' reply was a very strange one. He bids the messengers look about them and return to the Baptist and tell him what they had seen. The most striking thing which they saw was that a message of good news was being told to the poor.

The most common and most widely diffused form of pain in this world is poverty. It is the prolific mother of an innumerable brood of ills. From it spring physical pain, mental distress,

starvation of the affections—a thousand other misfortunes. God spreads a feast in this world for all, but the weak, the foolish, the unfortunate, cannot get to the table. One who is strong snatches his own portion, and that of a dozen others, and the dozen thus robbed go hungry. In their distress they cry out: "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Is the Gospel of Christ really the last word of comfort to the poor?"

Never did poverty appear so hard as it does to-day. This is not so much because there is more of it,—there is probably less of it,—but it hurts more than it ever did before. Every poor man lives to-day in plain sight of the luxuries and pleasures of the rich. A century ago he lived out of sight of them. Then, the poor man's sensibilities have grown in quickness, as have the sensibilities of all men. Besides that, we live in a commercial age. Wealth is the standard of success. The poor man feels not only the lack of physical necessities, but he suffers in his soul with the burning, shameful sense of being a failure. It requires a rare spirit to even sympathize with Professor Agassiz when he said: "I have no time to make money." The absence of social rank or caste makes poverty harder to bear than it has been at other times. Being fixed in a poor caste has its compensations. It enables such a poor man to live according to the custom of his caste. In America there is no

such protection. At any rate, all will agree that there never has been a time when the problem of poverty has so exercised the minds of men as it has to-day. How is it to be solved? Has Christ anything to say in the premises? Many roundly assert either that He has no answer to give, or that His answer is a mockery. Secular science is in the habit of assuming that this is a social question which comes among her perquisites, and is rather inclined to warn the Church off the the premises.

What, then, is the Gospel of Christ for the poor? Before attempting to state it briefly, I would like to call your attention for a moment to the non-Christian gospels which have been promulgated. These are mainly two. Neither of them is satisfactory. The first is the purely economical one. It says that poverty is not natural, but artificial; that it is the consequence of vicious laws and customs; that these laws and customs have either grown up or been established in the interest of the rich; that the cure for existing evils is some better and more equitable mode of distribution—by law, if possible; by force, if necessary. It is probable that a majority of the voters in this country feel more or less in this way. It would be very shortsighted not to take account of this widespread feeling. Carlyle says: "Once upon a time a man named Rousseau wrote a book upon the subject and called it the 'Social Contract.' When it appeared the well-

to-do classes laughed it to scorn. The second edition of it was bound in their hides." It is better to show that it is a gospel which does not contain in it any hope for the poor. Its root vice is that it shuts its eyes to present facts. It assumes that the new society, when it shall have been adjusted by the professors, will be composed of men whose natures will be different from these we know now.

The second gospel, if it may so be called, is the gospel of science. It says that poverty is inevitable. In the struggle for existence the weak must go to the wall. It is a law of nature that in order that a few favorite individuals may live and develop, the great multitude of their kind must perish and decay, and become the soil in which the more fortunate ones flourish. This may be true, but it certainly is not a gospel.

Now, these two having spoken,—the one mischief and the other mockery,—let us hear what Jesus has to say. In the first place, He makes no misleading promises. He recognizes the facts of the case. He says: "The poor ye have always with you." Poverty is permanent. It has always been in the world and it always will be. What is desirable is to find some method to draw its sting, not undertake to remove it bodily. That cannot be done. Christ accepts it as a permanent fact. He builds upon it and roots virtues in it. Patience, fortitude, sympathy, charity—the whole gracious sister-

hood of Christian graces presuppose the existence of a necessity for their existence. His own human excellence is largely referred to this fact. The existence, then, of this evil, and of the ills which spring from it, would seem to have been a condition prerequisite for His own work. In the second place, He lays the total emphasis upon charity. This is the one word about which practical Christianity revolves. In the secular schemes for the amelioration of the condition of humanity, the idea of charity is as far as possible eliminated. Alms-giving is declared to be a blunder. A charity organization society is inclined to teach that it is better to put a man in the way to secure a cup of cold water for himself rather than hand it to him. It is better to force him to go naked, or compel him to earn his own cloak, rather than to give him a covering for his nakedness.

Jesus saw much deeper into the situation than this. He saw that charity, when it is charity, is an action which proceeds from real love for one's fellow-man—a virtue which is twice blessed, "blessing him that gives as well as him that doth receive," and therefore cannot do hurt to either.

But probably the most inspiring element of His Gospel is His revelation of the world to come. Let no poor man start at this or be repelled. Let him not say: "I asked bread, and you gave me a stone from the streets of the New

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Jerusalem." Jesus' teaching is that the ills of this world cannot be dealt with in any permanent or satisfactory way, if this life be dealt with by itself. Men's bodies, as well as their souls, are bound not only to the life which now is, but to the life which is to come.

Nothing has ever been so potent to draw the pain out of poverty as has been the hope and expectation of a better life beyond. Those in misery always believe the Creed. It is the rich and luxurious men who doubt concerning the life to come. The poor and suffering always believe in it and look toward it. In point of fact, nothing has done so much to alleviate the condition of humanity as those two sentences that fell from the lips of the Master: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is true that these do not relieve physical ills or provide for physical wants, but they do better than that—they enter into the secret places of the soul. They furnish hope and stimulation, and, having thus set the soul of the poor man at peace, he is in a better and more willing mood to co-operate with society, with science, and with political economy in bringing the outward conditions of life to correspond with his inmost necessities.

XXXIV.

THE SON OF MAN.

"Who is this Son of man?"—JOHN xii. 34.

ONE of the fundamental laws of nature is that like begets like. That is the law which prohibits hybridity. It will not allow confusion to be introduced and carried very far within nature. Crosses between living things are only possible when the living things are closely allied. If by accident a cross is effected between creatures more widely separated, the offspring is incapable of reproduction. This principle would seem to lie at the root of Our Lord's habit of speaking of Himself as the "Son of Man" and also the "Son of God." The offspring of God and man must be something which shares the nature of both. It is for this reason that He calls Himself habitually by these names.

I ask you to look steadily at this fact until it sinks into your mind, and, in order that you may do so, to think of a few illustrations. They are not analogies, but they will serve to convey the same idea. For example, the old title of the Dauphin was "The Son of France." The title

conveyed the impression that he was not the son alone of his immediate father, but that he was in some sense the son and embodiment of the whole people. Mr. Lincoln has been spoken of as the "typical American." By that has been meant that he combined in himself in a pre-eminent degree all those qualities which manifest themselves ordinarily in different individuals, but which were in him combined in order to produce the American. You have seen the results of that odd discovery called composite photography. An ingenious artist takes upon a sensitive plate, one after another, a dozen New England manufacturers. On the same plate he superimposes a dozen New England professional men; upon that a dozen New England women, and so following. Each impression fuses with the impression which preceded, until the final result is the New Englander. The picture is of no particular person, but it is something deeper and more true than would have been the photograph of any individual. Would it be an idle fancy to suppose that if all the features of all the men and women of all times and places since the world was, should be superimposed upon one sensitive plate the result would be a picture of the Son of Man?

Whether it be or no, this is clearly the underlying truth in all our Lord's thought about Himself. He refers over and over again to His humanity as the ground of His deep and intelli-

gent sympathy for men, while being at the same time the Son and transcript of Almighty God. It is with His humanity we have to deal to-day. He was the most humane of men. He was the most social of men. It is true that occasionally He went apart by Himself into a solitary place to commune with His Father in heaven, but He quickly returns to commune with His brothers. He was the most devoted of friends; He bound His friends to Himself. The only instance of anything like repining at His own lot was His pathetic lament that "the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests," while the Son of Man has no home. Now, this intelligent sympathy with all human necessities becomes the more remarkable when you consider the narrow range of His own actual experiences. It was not by passing through all the experiences of human life that He learned what human life is. For instance, He was not a woman; He never was a father, nor a mother; He was never a husband, nor a lover, nor a man of business, nor a soldier. Experimentally He was ignorant of all the emotions and trials which spring out of these human relationships. Nor is it a sufficient answer to say He knew all these things "because He was divine." It was not because He was divine. That way of thinking, apparently simple as it is, is utterly unscriptural and empties the Incarnation of all its meaning. Being absolutely the Son of Man, in this fact He

rests His right to judge men, and the apostle declares that His judgment will be accurate, for that it will be based upon a knowledge of all the facts.

I ask you now to note the bearing of this truth upon the estimate of human nature. The best sample, because the truest example, of human nature that has ever been was Jesus Christ. This fact has been obscured by a curious theological dogma which has separated the Man Christ from natural human nature. It has vilified human nature, and has not hesitated to declare that it is totally depraved. It is hard to say how such a charge can be brought against human nature without savoring of blasphemy. Christ was not ashamed of His race. He even goes so far as to attribute His qualities to the nature which He shared with all men. With an equal right to the title, Son of God, He habitually put it to one side and spoke of Himself as the Son of Man. It would seem to be that He felt the necessity of saving men from their low opinions of themselves. He wished to lift them up into higher things by inspiring them in advance with a confidence in the possibilities of their own nature. He identified Himself so completely with men that He takes as a personal kindness the proffer of a cup of cold water to the most abject of human beggars.

It may be objected, "If He so completely represents humanity, why was He not recognized

by them for what He was? Why was He despised, rejected, and driven out?" I reply, He was not rejected by human nature; He was rejected by something which in its very essence is inhuman. That something is sin. The teaching of Scripture from beginning to end is that sin is not natural, but unnatural. It is not part of human nature. It can be rooted out without damaging the human structure. It is an abnormal growth, a fungus. It has by right no place in humanity at all. And this is humanity's own judgment of the situation. Why is it that Christendom has passed the stern and relentless condemnation which it has passed upon the Jews? It has condemned them because it has pronounced them false to their own kind. Their offense was not primarily that they rejected God, but that they did not know what man is when they had an opportunity to see. Their offense was against humanity. Humanity has visited upon the race a vindictive, and even an inexcusable, penalty. But no one should mistake the reason for it.

The moral uplift of this principle is unspeakable. What He was we are capable of becoming. The whole process of practical Christianity is simply the attempt to remove obscurities from the soul of a natural man, to bring the overloaded, and therefore helpless, faculties of an individual up to "the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ." This should be set

about intelligently. Men in attempting to be this, should understand what they are doing.

Hugh Miller observes somewhere, that when he was working with other stone cutters in a marble yard he discerned a fundamental difference among the workers. There were some of them, always poor workers, who approached the statue within the block by mechanical and unintelligent methods. There were others who seemed to have the faculty to discern within the block a statue complete and symmetrical. Every blow of the hammer of such a one was addressed simply to clearing away the rough marble which hid the figure. They saw the statue within and set about to free it. Their labor thus became economical and the result certain.

There is an image of God in every man. When a man "comes to himself" he shows himself to be a son of God. In the case of Jesus one sees a full and complete personality. It was given to Him alone to hold fast with one hand to the Eternal God, while He laid the other in benediction upon the fevered brow of men.

XXXV.

SOWING AND REAPING.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap."—GALATIANS vi. 7.

ST. PAUL here uses what appears to be a very simple metaphor until one attempts to unfold it and see what it implies. He then discerns the tremendous truth which it contains. There is nothing more familiar than the phenomena of sowing and reaping. The husbandman flings a handful of grain upon the upturned soil and then goes about his business. The gardener dibbles a hole and drops a seed in, and, for the present, that is the end of it. But both the farmer and the gardener unconsciously trust to the operation of two of the most wonderful and inscrutable forces in nature. The first of these is that curious power which lodges in nature herself, which seizes hold upon the seed that has been intrusted to it and compels it to grow. Nature receives the bare grain at the hands of the farmer. She does the rest herself. By a curious and secret method of coercion she compels the seed to unfold integument after integument. She urges the little germ at the center to vegetate and sprout. Her rains fall upon it, her dews

moisten it, her sun warms it, her chemical supply feeds it with nourishing juices. The farmer assumes that nature will do all this for the seed which he intrusts to her hands. He knows also that not a single one of these effects can he produce himself.

But he submits the seed to the ground also in confidence of the operation of another power of nature, which, if possible, is more inscrutable still. It is that strange quality which lodges in a little seed, by which it has the power to determine what the fruit shall be, if any, which comes therferom. The little grain itself is insignificant as a speck of dust, but it possesses in it a power of determination which settles the question finally whether the thing that will grow from it shall be wheat or deadly nightshade. These two forces are those which the sower takes for granted—the power of nature to operate upon the seed and compel it to grow, the power of the seed itself to determine what the fruit shall be.

Now, St. Paul applies these physical facts to moral things. He says in effect that life—this life, with its complex arrangements and forces—is a great upturned field. Men's actions, and thoughts, and deeds, and impulses are seeds which they fling into this field. When one has thus scattered them they have passed out of his hands, but they have not passed away. They have been taken hold of by the forces of the moral universe. In each one of them is a dif-

ferentiating quality which determines the result.

There is nothing startling about all this, one would say. But let us examine it a little more closely. The popular conception of the Gospel of Christ is that it is an antidote to correct a poison previously taken; that it is an act of oblivion, of which one may take advantage to escape the consequences of his previous faults; that it is a device to cut in between cause and consequence, making it possible for a man to gather grapes when he has planted the seed of thorns. This is the way *Falstaff* thought of it. He meditates in one of his moralizing moods: "'Tis time to quit fighting o' days, foining o' nights, and begin to patch up my old body for heaven." *Dame Quickly* had the same notion. When the fat old knight lay dying, the hostess says that "he babbled o' green fields and said God, God, God, three or four times, whereupon I, to comfort him, bade him he should not think upon God; that there was no need for such thoughts yet." One has a feeling of shock when he hears the great apostle state in such bald fashion that not even the Gospel of Christ provides a power to exempt any man from reaping what he has sown. Nevertheless St. Paul is right. It was not the purpose of God in Christ either to reverse or suspend the elemental laws of his universe. But it must be admitted that the presence of a saying like our text, appears to

introduce a false note into the harmony of the Gospel of grace. There can be no question, however, of the fact. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," the Master says. "Ye cannot gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles." You will observe he appeals to a necessity. He does not make any arbitrary enactment. He simply announces in his quiet and awful fashion that things are as they are.

Now, in the lower areas of life, one can see that this law is universal. It could only be in a world like Alice's Wonderland that one could expect to reap anything except that which he had sown. We depend upon this principle of uniformity in nature. We build all our plans upon it. If caprice were allowed to enter at any point, so far as we can see, physical and mental life would be impossible. St. Paul says that the same thing is true in the spiritual area. In the human soul a seed of evil suggestion or of good is seized upon by the forces of the soil itself, is compelled to unfold until it produces fruit after its kind.

Of course my purpose is not to discourage any attempt at good or to fix one in any closed circle of fate. I want to point out what Jesus really did contribute to the situation. The first thing is His revelation, that the universe itself is on the side of the good seed and not on the side of the bad. Things are so constituted that it is more natural for good to bear fruit than for evil

to do the same. The ultimate penalty of evil is barrenness. Good is fecund. We all see the world slowly and intermittently, but all the same surely, growing better. It does so because it is natural for it to grow better, and it is unnatural for it to grow worse. You have observed, I dare say, that no man ever becomes bad suddenly, while on the contrary, if a bad man becomes good, it is always effected quickly. I do not mean to say, of course, that there is possible any instantaneous or magical process which will change a bad man into a good one, but that this change is always more quickly done than the reverse process. Take the case, for example, of a man fallen into the vice of drunkenness, and recovering therefrom. He never becomes a drunkard in a day. He goes down, little by little, step by step, and slowly. If he ever recovers, however, it is not by retracing his downward steps one by one. It is by means of one supreme resolution by which he recovers almost at once all the ground that he had lost. One cannot reform slowly. He either does it quickly, or he does not do it at all. Nor does he become bad instantaneously. Says Beaumont in the old play: "There is a method in men's wickedness; it grows by degrees. I am not yet come so high as the killing of myself. There are a hundred thousand sins 'twixt me and that which I must do. But I shall come to it—I shall come to it."

It is this principle also which explains the ter-

rible curse which our Lord launches at the heads of those who would wantonly or maliciously uproot the beginnings of good. "Whoso offendeth one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were tied about his neck and that he were cast into the depths of the sea." Jesus classes this offense against feeble virtue or against halting faith with such crimes as murdering children or poisoning wells. The little one is not intrinsically of such great value, but he is the seed out of which great things may grow. One sometimes speaks lightly of "sowing wild oats." If sowing such seed was flinging it away finally, one might speak of it in a jest, but when he remembers that the moral universe is watching to seize upon that scattered grain, and that it will not permit a single kernel of it to be lost, that it will cause it all to bear fruit, and that it will compel the sower to reap it when the time comes, then he will not speak or think of it lightly.

We see thus that St. Paul uncovers one of the most eternal and most awful truths in the whole universe of God. Jesus states the final issue. The reapers are the angels. The seed is thoughts and deeds. The universe compels them to grow and ripen. When the time comes the harvest will be. Some will be gathered into garners, some will be gathered into bundles to be burned, to be burned not so much because they are noxious, as because they are useless.

XXXVI.

THE PROOF.

"For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."—1 PETER ii. 15.

THE prime purpose of Christianity is to make men good. It has other incidental aims, but this is the chief one. By making them good it sometimes makes them happy, though not always. It may do this or it may not. That depends upon circumstances. It may fail of this secondary purpose in any instance, and still not be open to the charge of having failed intrinsically. But if it should fail in its main purpose, nothing could save its repute. If it does not manifest itself in the world as a power for righteousness, it cannot vindicate its right to be in the world at all. The apostle recognizes this and states it in a very bold fashion. He points to it as the evidence of its divinity. He says the proof of the divine quality of the religion of Jesus Christ is that it actually makes men better.

Now, it must be confessed that this is not the ordinary line of evidence for the divinity of Christ or His Gospel. There are two other lines

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Now, it must be confessed that this is not the ordinary line of evidence for the divinity of Christ or His Gospel. There are two other lines

of argument which are almost invariably relied upon. The first is the *a priori* reasonableness of the revelation. It points to the fact that it is likely that God would at some point in history break the silence of the ages and reveal himself to men. Then it calls attention to the words and work of Jesus, and declares that they correspond so completely with what man might expect from God that they are compelled to believe that they are the revelation of God. It insists that He fulfills all the conditions and tests of divinity, and that therefore He can be proved to be divine before the bar of the understanding. This is, in rough, the first and most common path of evidential reasoning.

The second is an appeal to the outward facts of history. It points to the extent and potency of the visible Church. It walks around about its walls and views the towers thereof. It says, "Behold, what goodly stones are these." It points to the millions of members, to the artistic beauty of its fabric, to its power in law and in society. It says, "Look, there is Christianity. It has conquered a place for itself. It proves its divinity by its bigness." Now, both of these lines of argument are very valuable for certain purposes, but neither of them prove the existence of any divine quality in Christ. One of them is a purely intellectual structure, the other is an appeal to what is called common sense. Both of these remain within the circle of natural things,

and cannot escape from it to God. Whole libraries of apologetics might survive even after the world had discovered that Christianity was but a natural religion. The ecclesiastical empire might be perfect, and yet Christianity fail utterly.

Christ has rested the evidence of His religion upon the conduct of His followers. "Ye are living epistles, known and read of all men." The quality of the religion which you profess will be judged ultimately by what men read in you. "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewithal shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men." "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven."

Now, the practical question arises, Is this kind of proof forthcoming? Are those who profess and call themselves Christians really better than the average of humanity? Are they so much better that the world is justified in attributing their goodness to a divine source? Christians themselves shrink from being put in this position. A sort of artificial modesty leads them to decline the obligation which their Master laid upon them. They would prefer that Christianity should not be judged by their conduct. But there is no escape. The Christian must be

better than other men. If he be not better, Christianity breaks down.

It is true, however, that both the Church and the world hesitate to move along this line of evidence. The secularist denies it utterly. He declares that goodness has a basis of its own. That its roots can be found in the conditions of human existence. That divine forces from outside are not needed to bring men into goodness. There is a mischievous movement in certain circles toward rehabilitating paganism. It would substitute the light of Asia for the Son of Righteousness. It would put Sakyi Mouni for Moses. It would substitute Guatama for Christ. What will serve to stem this mischievous current? Argument will not do it. The men who are driven in this current are either not open to argument or they are better arguers than are the Christians. The only evidence for Christ is Christians. They can stem and turn back this dangerous movement only by the purity, the kindliness, the divinity of their own lives. When they do this, and if they do this, they will be able to show not only the folly, but the danger, of the tendency of which I have spoken. Mr. Russell Lowell has said: "I fear that when we indulge ourselves in the amusement of going without a religion, we are not perhaps aware how much we are sustained at present by an enormous mass all about us of religious feeling and religious conviction, so that whatever it may be safe

for us to think, for us who have had great advantages and have been brought up in such a way that a certain moral direction has been given to our character, I do not know what would become of the less favored classes of mankind if they undertook to play the same game. Whatever defects and imperfections may attach to a few points of the doctrinal system of Christianity, it is infinitely preferable to any form of polite and polished skepticism which gathers as its votaries the degenerate sons of heroic ancestors, who, having been trained in a society and educated in schools, the foundations of which were laid by men of faith and piety, now turn and kick down the ladder by which they have climbed up, and persuade men to live without God, and leave them to die without hope. The worst kind of religion is no religion at all, and these men who indulge themselves in the amusement of going without a religion, may be thankful that they live in lands where the Gospel they neglect has tamed the beastliness and ferocity of the men, who, but for Christianity, might long ago have eaten their carcasses, like the South Sea Islanders, or cut off their heads and tanned their hides, like the monsters of the French Revolution. When the microscopic search of skepticism, which has hunted the heavens and sounded the seas, shall have turned its attention to human society, and found a place on this planet ten miles square where a decent man can live in de-

cency and comfort and security, supporting and educating his children unspoiled and unpolluted, a place where age is reverenced, infancy respected, manhood respected, womanhood honored, and human life held in due regard—when skeptics can find such a place ten miles square on this globe, where the Gospel of Christ has not gone before and cleared the way and laid the foundations and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for them to ventilate their views. But so long as they are dependent upon the religion which they criticise for every privilege which they enjoy, they may well hesitate a little before they seek to rob the Christian of his hope, and humanity of its faith, in that Saviour who alone has given to men all that makes life tolerable and society possible."

XXXVII.

HIS RELIGION TO BE UNIVERSAL.

"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."—2 Timothy iii. 7.

It is quite clear that Jesus intended his religion to be universal. In the programme which He announced and reiterated more than once, He looked forward to a time when all men would be familiar with His Gospel, and would govern their lives according to its principles. Nearly twenty centuries have passed away, and His expectation does not seem to have been realized. Less than one-third of the human race at this moment is even nominally Christian. Of that third it would probably be exaggeration to allege that more than one-third are, in any sense, governed and restrained by the thought of the Master. The problem is most difficult. One who looks steadfastly at the facts of the case will be surprised and saddened to discover that there is, even at this moment, the greatest possible perplexity as to what the truth of Christ actually is. Men have been learning it for nineteen centuries, and they do not seem to have yet attained to anything like a precise or scientific

notion of its contents. This lack of knowledge cannot be referred to lack of interest or attention or time expended. There is no one subject, probably, at this moment, upon which so much thought is expended to understand, and so much time, money, and labor expended in its diffusion, as in the case of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the United States alone there are something like seventy-five thousand professional teachers of Christianity. They devote practically their whole time to this, and to nothing else. They are set apart for that express purpose, and are maintained at the cost of the Christian community for the discharge of this purpose. There are something like seven hundred of them in this city alone. Over and above this is an incalculable mass of books, newspapers, tracts, and literature of various sorts, to the same end. The purpose of all this is to make the truth of Christ known to a generation which is "ever learning," and, somehow, is "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Now, what will explain this paradox? On the one side is the alleged simplicity of the Gospel; on the other hand is this enormously complex machinery for its teaching and diffusion; and the outcome of both these is widespread ignorance and uncertainty as to what is the actual content of the faith. It causes one to ask, Is the truth itself simple, or is it so obscure and complex and profound, that the average man must, in

spite of all his effort and study, fail in apprehending it? This has been alleged very frequently. It is clear, however, that those men who first heard Him did not regard His truth as difficult to apprehend. He announced it to the common people, and they heard Him gladly. They would not have heard Him gladly if they had not heard Him intelligently. If men heard the same message intelligently to-day, they would, no doubt, receive it with at least something of the same gladness. Is there anything, then, that will account for the widespread vagueness of conception in this matter, in spite of such effective machinery for teaching? I think it may be accounted for.

It is evident that the first cause of perplexity is our unhappy divisions. So long as the Christian Church remains divided as it is to-day, each sect of which teaches its portion of the truth as fundamental, and so long as there is such wide disagreement as there is to-day among them as to what is fundamental and what is not, it is quite plain that the world in which the Church lives will remain puzzled and indifferent and likely to become exasperated. One condition absolutely prerequisite for the world's coming to a knowledge of the truth, is that the Church shall first agree as to what the truth is.

In the second place, the confusion has been and is due largely to that unfortunate habit that the Church fell into almost from the beginning,

of overlaying truth with doctrines. The result has been that the Catholic Faith has been buried almost out of sight by the superincumbent mass of interpretations and creeds. The Scripture has been obscured by the mountain of commentaries built up before, behind, and round about it. The primary truths of the Gospel have been hidden from view by secondary and trivial dogmas.

But the third and the best explanation is quite a different and more fundamental one. Every department of knowledge has its own methods. The method of study in one is utterly futile when applied to another. For example, one learns the truths of geography upon testimony of eye-witnesses, travelers, explorers, and surveyors. One learns the truths of mathematics by actually reproducing in his own mind the logical steps and stages through which the truths are attained. No one is foolish enough to try to learn mathematics by testimony, or to learn the facts about an unexplored country by mathematics. Each method fits in its own sphere and refuses to work when it is transferred to another kind of truth. Now, the reiterated teaching of Christ is that spiritual truth is attained by moral processes, and not by intellectual ones. It is not the philosopher, but the pure in heart, that shall see God. It is not he who formulates doctrines, but he who wills to do the will of Christ, who learns of His doctrine whether it be of God. He declares

that if the truth of His Gospel be hidden from any, it is from those who are morally astray. But why should purity of soul rather than mental grasp be the tool or instrument by which one uncovers the truth of Christ? I am not sure that I can say why. I fancy that here we come upon an original fact for which there is no explanation. It is difficult, I confess, to see the explanation of the fact, but that it is a fact there can be no question. The miser, for instance, is always an atheist. It is difficult to see why living in lust should lead a man to doubt or disbelieve the truth of the resurrection of the body; that it does do so no one who has ever had an opportunity to see intimately the actual interior lives of men will doubt. Why it should be that a selfish man, who disregards the well-being of his fellows, should be unable to see the meaning of the sacraments of Christ's Church is difficult to explain; but this again is true, as every priest and pastor knows. I think it would be possible to assign a psychological explanation of these facts, but it is sufficient for the present purpose to remind you that they are facts.

Now, Jesus does not expect that His truth will be seen by any except those who are antecedently more or less in sympathy with His character. It is by becoming good that one comes to see the divinity of the Son of Man. This process cannot be reversed, for it will not operate the other way. The world, in so far as it has come to understand

the truth of the Master, has accepted this fundamental doctrine, and accepted it gratefully. The reason of its gratitude is that this method of reaching the truth places all men on a common vantage ground. The cobbler may have clearer moral insight than the philosopher, or the statesman may be spiritually more strenuous than the day laborer. The possession of moral capacity would seem to be practically independent of all social position, of wealth, of learning, or even of knowledge. Jesus appeals to that quality in man which is the one quality in the possession of which all men stand upon a common level. He asks them to learn of Him, and He evidently expects that only those will come to His school who have some realization of the value of the lore which He teaches.

XXXVIII.

THE EXPRESSION OF RELIGION.

"There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard."—PSALM xix. 3.

THE essence of religion is intercourse with God. It is not the holding of a correct theology. One may be faultless in his creed, and still be profoundly irreligious. It is not a faultless morality. One may be as moral as a Pharisee, and still have no conception of what religion really is. It is communion with God. It is interchange of affection between the great Father and one of his children. Its lowest form is prayer, in the usual acceptation of that word. By that, I mean the asking favors of God. This is probably the lowest and most rudimentary form that religion can take. It corresponds with the cry of a child to its earthly parents for food. When it ceases to be a child, it does not ask favors, but becomes a companion of its father. The highest form of religion attainable, or which has yet been attained, is something like obsession. One is "possessed" of God so that, like St. Paul, his own identity becomes

uncertain. He is not quite sure whether it is himself or "Christ that dwelleth in him."

This interchange of affection and intelligence between the Father in heaven and the child on earth can be expressed in language. Its forms of expression constitute the most widely diffused and constant form of speech that exists among humanity. Every generation has stammered prayers to God, and has, at least, believed that it has heard responsive voices from the abyss. Day unto day, says the Psalmist—that is, every day and all days utter this speech, and all nights manifest this knowledge. Religion then has a language of its own. I wish to speak briefly concerning this language.

To begin with, it must, in the nature of the case, follow the general laws of all human speech. The language of religion does not cease to be human because it tries to express divine things. I ask you then to note three or four things about human speech. The first is that it has its origin in dim, unconscious sensation. Watch a little child. Its cries and broken sounds and inarticulate utterances are its efforts to express hunger, discomfort, or affection. The lower animals never get beyond this stage. Their speech is very meager, and springs directly from sensitive emotion. In the second place human speech is always progressive. No language is ever finished. New words, new forms, and new phrases are constantly coming into the

language, and old ones are becoming obsolete and dropping out. The dictionary of a tongue must be revised at least once in every generation. The language will not stay put. It grows at one end and decays at the other. In the third place human speech is always more or less inaccurate. Probably no two persons ever mean precisely the same thing by the same word. Two people read the same poem, the same description, the same argument, and while the general effect produced upon them is identical, still the impressions they receive are not by any means the same. In the fourth place language always breaks down in the presence of those profound and tremendous emotions and experiences which come to all men. Such a phrase as "I have no words in which to tell it," is a scientifically accurate expression. It refers to some experience or fact which is a real experience or fact, but which words are incapable of expressing. At such times one abandons his formulated speech and becomes exclamatory. In the presence of sudden and dire peril one utters but a cry. When one stands upon a mountain top, and his soul dilates as his eye travels over the beautiful world, he is either silent, or he exclaims—but he does not talk. The lover is dumb before his mistress. Every man is dumb when he faces death.

Now, it is not mere fancy to apply all these facts to the language of religion. Its purpose is

to express the facts of the actual communion with divine things. It is a faculty which probably every human being possesses, at least in a rudimentary form. But it must be borne in mind that, to begin with, it is only a capacity, and may remain that alone. Still, one feels surprise in hearing Dr. Johnson say that the near approach of death does not make every man religious. "Sir," said the Doctor, "they do not know how to set about it." This is literally true. The emotions of religion are probably felt from time to time by all, but its language must be learned. It seems amazing that parents will take the pains to teach their children to speak in every tongue except that by which one speaks to God. Not a few shrink not only from the language itself, but from the things which such a speech implies. The gross and earthly *Dame Quickly* describing the death of *Falstaff* says: "After I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbled of green fields. 'How now, Sir John!' quoth I! 'what, man: be o' good cheer.' So, 'a called out 'God, God, God!' three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with such thoughts yet; so 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet." The roistering old knight, whose great humanity appeals to so many, knew no words in which to

express the deepest emotion of his soul, and could but break into a cry. Old *Dame Quickly* could not even do that much. She was utterly dumb.

It is also true that when one begins to reach up to divine things his speech is uncertain and his vocabulary scant. Reasonable religion is justly impatient of elaborate confessions and long drawn out articles of religion. It is doubly impatient of such statements when they have been made so many years ago, that the change which always goes forward in human speech has rendered them inaccurate through sheer lapse of time. It is equally impatient when it hears too voluble statements of religious experiences. One is skeptical when listening to the man who describes too vividly and too much in detail his intercourse with God, just as one is suspicious of the real affection of the lover who can express his love in finely turned phrases. It cannot be denied, however, that there are some who can neither speak nor hear this language, more is the pity. They have either never known it, or they have lived for so long in surroundings where it is not spoken that they have ceased to understand it. One at least of the primary reasons for the Church is that it may bring individuals into a community where religion is spoken of and thought of, so that their religious faculties may develop through dint of use and practice.

It is doubtful, indeed, whether any man can

retain his religion by himself. A life of absolute solitude effaces in the individual the capacity to speak. The declaration of Scripture is that day and night are full of the voices of God. But some honest effort must be made by anyone who would catch the sound thereof, and understand their import. It is not enough that one should simply know the doctrines, the facts of Christianity. The creeds, the systems, the dogmas, the rituals of the Church, are like the dry musical scales of an oratorio. They must be clothed in sound and interpreted in music before they move the emotions or appeal to the understanding. Whoever strenuously bends his ear to listen for the sweet music of God in human life will hear it, and will be able to say with truth "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, nor the voice of them that cry for being overcome, but the sound of singing that I hear!"

XXXIX.

CONCERNING THE CHURCH.

"The disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."—St. Matthew xiii. 10, 11.

That is to say, there are some persons to whom the Master speaks plainly, and there are others who fail to catch the meaning of His words. Is this due to the different characters of the two classes? Are there some who are naturally capable of understanding and others naturally incapable? To a certain extent this is the explanation. There is this difference among people. But it is not the distinction which He has in mind here. What He says is that there is one class of people who can understand because they have put themselves in a position to do so; while another class, clearly capable by nature, fail to understand because their position toward Him is not right. In a word, He says that He will tell His secrets to the members of His society, and He not only will not, but cannot, tell them to those outside of His society. This society is

usually, and properly, spoken of as the Church. It is right here that we see the fundamental meaning and use of the Church.

What is it? What is it for?

To begin with, all sober-minded persons will agree that the hope of humanity is in some way bound up in Jesus Christ. If His programme should fail, there is no other in sight. If His plan for the redemption of the world for any reason fails to operate, there is no other plan ready to take the field. Not only the eternal future of individuals, but the actual future of society is fastened to His fortunes. Probably few, if any, will question this.

But it is the thought of many that His work is not necessarily connected in any way with a society or organization. There are myriads of people who call themselves Christians, and really believe that they are so, who not only have no connection with the Church, but who do not believe that their Christianity is in any way dependent upon their connection therewith. They call themselves Christians. Sometimes they belong to one sect or society and sometimes to another. They pass from one such society to another without hesitation. It is purely a matter of convenience. It does not enter their minds that any one organization has claims upon them more than another. Often they say of themselves that they "do not belong to any particular church." Their goodness is not in question.

The question really is about their attitude toward Christ's visible society. This feeling, we fancy, underlies the Christian lives of the great majority of Protestants. To their way of thinking one becomes a Christian first and joins the Church afterward. Indeed, it is not absolutely essential that he should join the Church at all. When he does do so he casts about among the various organizations to find the one which best "suits" him, and unites himself with it. His whole action proceeds from the fundamental belief that religion and church membership have no necessary connection with one another.

I believe this position to be fundamentally false. I believe the secret of the comparative failure of Christ's programme in the world is to be found in the wide prevalence of this error. At present the "Church idea" obtains practically among Roman Catholics, Quakers, largely among Episcopalians, and among a few of the smaller divisions of Presbyterians. Elsewhere it hardly exists at all. This is all the more strange when we remember that up to a period of less than two centuries ago the Church idea was universal. Among the peoples influenced by the Reformation there was the widest difference of opinion as to which particular body was the Church, but all agreed that membership in it was necessary to salvation. It would be interesting to trace the causes which have brought about the loss of this conception, but this is not to my purpose now.

It may be said in general that it has been due to that spirit of individualism which has operated in civil society as well as ecclesiastical. There is every reason to believe just now that it has run its course. The tendency in politics is no longer toward individualism, but toward political organization. The same thing can be easily seen in the religious world. The wide-spreading interest in the question of church unity is simply the unconscious attempt to discover and identify the Church of Christ. This makes it worth while to inquire briefly why it is that we believe salvation and the Church to be bound up together. In general, the reason is a purely practical and common-sense one. That which we call salvation is a process which has its final issue, to be sure, in the next life, but it is one which has to be wrought out in this world. Now, because it is a process which must be wrought, if at all, by human instrumentalities, it is therefore dependent upon those laws and methods which obtain in all human things. Christians, like other folk, live in an actual world. If they would effect anything, it must be done by the same kind of processes which are necessary in this world.

As things are in this life of ours, even divine processes can only be effected by the use of machinery. God's objects are divine, but His methods are practical. Whether He could do so or not, it is evident that He will not work with-

out tools. Now, the redemption of humanity—that is, the saving of men from their sins and their follies, the purification of human society—all this is an enormous contract. It stands to reason that it cannot be done without suitable means. Nothing in anything analogous to it is done without the use of suitable instruments. For good government, or indeed for government of any kind, that which we call the State is essential. For human affections, that institution which we call the family is essential. So for the great process which includes both these, as well as a thousand others, it is but divine common-sense that an organization should be provided. If what we call "salvation" were only the effort of individual souls to save themselves from future disaster, each individual soul might, conceivably, do this without reference to any other soul. But this is a conception of salvation which Jesus disavows. He will have nothing to do with it. It is a significant fact that whenever individuals come to feel deeply any of the ills of humanity, they proceed at once to organize themselves into a society whose purpose is to alleviate those ills. Such a society is, as far as it goes, a church. Even those religionists who make least of the Church idea recognize this necessity in their own work.

In this connection it is but ordinary candor to face the objection so often made that the Church is not broad enough to include all those who

would willingly co-operate with Christ in His divine purpose for humanity. I believe that objection to be unfounded. It is perfectly true that organizations calling themselves churches have from time to time made conditions of membership which could not and ought not to be accepted by those whose allegiance the Church has sought. This is true to some extent, though not nearly to the extent that the Church's critics allege. Such conditions, when they have been made, usually affect the ministry and officers of the society alone. As a rule they do not touch the actual life of its members. We believe that within any of those societies which may be called component parts of the Church of Christ, there is more liberty of belief and of action, ten times over, than there is in those other societies which have been organized for a kindred purpose by men themselves. The truth is, that just in proportion as a society is really a church, in the same proportion are its members free. Nevertheless, we cannot help seeing that there are thousands of men and women who admire and sympathize with the purpose of Christ, and who stand outside of His church because they declare, and no doubt believe, that their reasonable liberty would be curtailed if they enrolled themselves in its membership.

I am deeply persuaded that the thing above all else which is just now needed within the

Christian world is a clearer conception of the idea of the Church. It is the Master's divinely appointed method of redeeming the world. It is the method which commends itself to common sense, and has been approved by human experience. In actual fact the Church in its organized capacity is doing the best work for God that is being done in the world at this moment. It is doing it best in those places and portions where it most clearly realizes its own divine establishment.

XL.

SINNING BY PROXY.

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins."—1 TIMOTHY v. 22.

IN the case of Mr. Parnell a few years ago, the question arose as to how far it were possible for men to co-operate politically with a man whose personal character had been blasted. It was no theoretical question. It involved practical politics. Here was one of the born leaders of men; he was a political genius. What his followers believed to be a great cause was dependent upon his leadership. But the world had pronounced him to be hopelessly bad personally. Could they any longer follow him politically? They were compelled to decide reluctantly that they could not, and Mr. Parnell passed out of sight. The question which arose there was one which is constantly confronting the disciple of Christ. How shall he bear himself toward bad men and women? It happens at times that he has to associate with people upon whom charity cannot exercise itself. One has to do with such in society, in business, in politics, in the mutual exchanges of human interest. How shall the

consistent Christian act toward them so as not to be in any sense a partaker of their sins? Of course, I assume that I speak to those who wish to know their duty in order to do it. My purpose is not simply to discuss a knotty question in casuistry.

Now, to be more specific, shall a Christian woman retain upon her list the name of a notoriously bad man? Shall she send him an invitation to her reception? I assume that his badness is beyond all question. Charity has done its utmost work for him, and has exhausted itself. He is lewd, unclean, dishonorable, although he still retains his standing in society. My lady believes him to be thoroughly unworthy. She loathes his offenses and despises him, and believes that he ought to be made to feel the whip of public scorn. Shall she invite him under her roof on any occasion, or to sit at her table?

Take another instance. Shall a Christian man continue to hold stock in and receive dividends from a corporation which, in its corporate capacity, notoriously violates the laws of God and the laws of man? There are such corporations. The men who manage them are personally men of standing, but the corporation itself is one which has been judged by the public and has been pronounced bad. It grinds the faces of the poor. It abuses the necessities of its employees. It systematically breaks faith with the commun-

ity. It bribes the legislature. It disregards the promises involved in its franchises. It is greedy, unscrupulous, vile. Now, what about the ownership of stock in it? Its shares are widely scattered. They were honestly bought and are held by good men and women. These men and women detest and abhor the methods of the corporation, which have been mentioned, when they become aware of them. Shall they still continue to draw their dividends? If not, what shall they do with their stock?

Or, take another instance. Shall one go to the theater to see a notorious adultress upon the stage? She is a genius, the queen of her art, but her character, or her brazen lack of character, is notorious. She has taken no pains to conceal it. She flaunts it in the world's face. "Her fault is not an accident, 'tis her trade!" Assuming, then, that theater-going is as innocent intrinsically as tennis-playing, does it remain innocent when the star is such a notoriously fallen star?

One could multiply such instances by the dozen. They confront the Christian daily, hourly, in his walk through life. How shall he escape the pollution of other men's sins? In a primitive community the problem would be, and was, much less difficult. Human lives were not entangled with each other as they now are. A man or a family lived a self-contained life—as they cannot now. The conditions of all living are so complicated that they have made the con-

ditions of Christian living far more difficult. For example, in the case of the bad man whom the pure matron hesitates to invite to her home, it unfortunately happens that he has a wife or sisters, a mother or father, who are clean, honorable. With the "human blindness kindly given," they refuse to believe in his unworthiness. If his name is omitted from the invitation they will decline to come, and maybe the sweet friendship of years will be destroyed. What is she to do?

Or, again, a man in business says, "I know very well the evils of the men, and the methods, with whom I am compelled to deal, but I do not make the conditions of business. They are as hard and as inevitable as are the physical laws of the universe. I cannot set up a different code of my own. There is no chance for it. I must shut the eyes of my conscience, and open its mouth, and swallow the things which I loathe." Or one says: "I am aware of the character of the actor upon the stage before which I sit. But I love art. I need relaxation. If I absent myself from the theater every time that a man or woman of doubtful reputation appears upon the stage, I shall be compelled to starve an innocent appetite for an innocent amusement."

The difficulty of the situation seems to many to be incurable. It is so perplexing that thousands of good people have given up trying to solve it. They simply follow the fashion, what-

ever it may be. They observe the conventional requirements of business, society, politics, or what not, and rest content with that. Is there no clew to this labyrinth? How shall the Christian live his life in the midst of the complexities of modern society, and at the same time keep himself unspotted from the world?

There have been two solutions which have commended themselves to multitudes of good Christians, which seem, however, to be both faulty and dangerous. The first is what is known as "spiritual direction." The individual Christian begins by confessing that the practical problem of Christian living is too difficult for himself. He therefore puts his life under the guidance of an expert. He goes to the priest. He confesses to him day by day, or week by week, his deeds of the past and his intentions for the future, and asks to be directed. If he be docile his spiritual director will guide him and will assume the responsibility. The method has great attractions. It appears to be a simple and natural solution of the difficulty. It has been adopted in many Churches and in many ages. There are thousands of good Christians who still believe in and practice it. Still, I venture to think and to say that it is wrong, and doubly dangerous. Experience is against it. Once consistently carried out, it ends by making the individual who adopts it a confirmed spiritual child, if not a hopeless imbecile. If he begins by being

willing to be led by the hand, he ends by becoming unable to walk.

The other method is more subtle and, if possible, more dangerous still. It is the attempt to distinguish between professional and personal character. It says, for instance, "I am not disturbed by the personal character of the actors upon the stage. I have nothing to do with their personal character. It is not the man I go to see, but the actor. If he is master of his art, and can interpret to me the facts and emotions of the drama of human life, I am content. I neither know nor care what he is before he comes upon the stage nor after he leaves it. I see him only in his stage dress, and he is to me not a man at all, but an artist. I have no more to do with his personal character than I have with the personal character of the surgeon whom I call in to perform an operation upon a member of my family. In that case I seek the surgeon who knows his business best. If he can do the thing for which I hire him, I come in contact with him solely at that point and touch his life nowhere else."

Is this answer satisfactory? There is much in it. If it were not so specious it would not be so generally adopted as it is by clear-minded people. You will observe that it is the contention which was made by the friends of Mr. Parnell. Probably there is no case upon record where it has been more ably urged than it was in that instance. But it was urged in vain. The robust moral

sense of a Christian community refused to entertain it. They refused wisely. It is a principle of action which is attended by the direst moral peril. In the first place, it is directly in the teeth of the teaching of Holy Scripture. That book, which experience has proven to be the surest guide to men's steps in moral things, insists upon distinguishing between good men and bad. Its glory is that it refuses to gloss over moral distinctions. It says always that the good are good, and the bad are bad, and that this distinction is in the individual himself. In the second place, it proceeds from a radically false notion of human nature. It assumes that it is possible for two human personalities, like two circles, to touch each other at a single point only. That they may touch one another in society, in business, in politics, in amusement, and remain apart in all the other points of their lives. Right here is the mistake. When two human beings come in touch at all, they touch throughout their whole extent. The process is not a mechanical, but a vital, one. If we permit a polluted soul to touch ours at all, the pollution discolors, as a drop of colored liquid will discolor a vase of crystal water. The two lives flow together. They mingle so quickly, and they combine with such a chemical obstinacy, that it requires a spiritual chemical reagent to precipitate them. As the Scripture puts it, one "cannot touch pitch and not be defiled."

But the final reason why the Christian may not adopt this principle of action is because if he does so, it destroys his power as a "witness." It puts out his light. The Master conceived clearly of the task to be done by Him and by His followers in this world. There is a great heap of wrongs to be reduced. There are evils to be rectified. There is a whole world of bad things to be made good. The first step in this direction is that Christ's co-laborer must get himself clear from the evil which he proposes to attack. He cannot live permanently in both camps. He cannot come and go without let or hindrance from one camp to another. It is in this consideration that one finds the key to Christian living in the presence of evil. He must always so bear himself that he can rebuke sin. He cannot rebuke it if he hold shares of stock in it. He cannot approach the wrong-doer as a missionary so long as he can be accused with any sort of color in sharing in the wrong of the evil-doer. Probably no simpler test could be discovered to apply to conduct in this regard than for each Christian to ask himself the question: "Can I share in this business, in this pleasure, in this society, and at the same time be sure that I shall be listened to if I point to the evils in any of them?"

XLI.

MEN'S EVIL TURNED TO GOOD.

"They gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over."—JOHN vi. 13.

THESE pieces of barley bread and dried fish had just passed through the alembic of a miracle. From it they emerged and were still barley bread and dried fish. The miracle had not transformed their quality. It had increased their quantity; it had changed their use, but it had not destroyed their identity.

This is a parable of the process whereby the "natural" man becomes the "spiritual" man. The process is a divine one. It is miraculous in the highest degree. But it does not destroy the man's identity. The "new man" is formed from the material which existed in the "old man." Here is the great problem of personal religion. How can a man be transformed into a new creature without losing his identity? It is not so much fear of the pain of plucking out one's right eye, or cutting off one's right hand, which makes him hesitate at the frontier of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the fear that he would not be himself, but someone else, after he should enter. How can a man eliminate all his

badness and still retain his identity? The classic pagan thought of a dark flowing river which all men must finally cross. This river was on the one side Lethe and on the other side Eunoe. He who walked down its hither bank lost all memory of the past in its water; crossing to the farther side he was reborn and emerged another creature. Unfortunately there is no such river, nor would men willingly enter it if there were. What shall one who strives to fashion his life according to Christ do with his own evil past? It remains a fact, it cannot be obliterated, it cannot be forgotten—what is to be done?

Think for a moment of the strange way in which the whole course of a man's life is bound together by the ligature of memory. Every soul keeps a record of its own past. This record embraces the sins as well as the virtues. Indeed, the sins are more deeply engraven on the tablet of memory than the virtues. One fancies sometimes that he has forgotten, that they have passed into oblivion. He is mistaken, he has not forgotten them. They are liable at any moment to emerge into his consciousness to surprise and shame him. One's soul is a labyrinth. Memory takes him by the hand at times and leads him reluctantly into its dark places, when to his astonishment he finds that he has been there before and has left a mark. Even the body has a memory. Evil acts have grown into habits, and the habits have changed, as it were,

the molecular constitution of the flesh. The universe in which we live has a memory. It is a plastic matrix. One's form gives it shape, and the shape hardens. Every act, thought, impulse, good or bad, records itself in one's own memory and in the unconscious memory of the universe. There they abide.

Here, then, is the problem. We enter upon the new life, if we enter upon it at all, with ineffaceable memories. If we be converted we be still the same persons. Now, how can cordial relations be established with God, to whom the secrets of all hearts are exposed? It would clearly be impossible for any man or woman to live twenty-four hours in the presence of any other man or woman who literally knew everything that there is or has been in the way of thought or action in his soul and body. No human consciousness could abide it. Probably if there were but two human beings in existence, and if the secrets of each one were thoroughly exposed to the other, they would prefer the loneliness of the opposite sides of the world rather than such a dreadful companionship. How, then, is life with God possible with a shamed memory? Bear in mind there is no such thing as forgetting. Things do not pass out of the memory; they sink down in it out of sight, and one cannot recall them at will, but they are always there and always liable to be recalled even by an accident. In one's dreams of the

night, things of the past climb up from the depths of recollection where he had supposed them to be buried out of sight and forgotten. Buried things out of these depths stand about his bed and make his night hideous. What can one do in the presence of God, to whom all things are as an open book?

There is a sort of pious notion that God, out of His mere good nature, will "forgive and forget" upon the mere asking. Such a notion springs from ignorance, both of God and of man. Forgiveness of sins is not so simple a matter, and the forgetting of sins is more difficult still. If forgiveness of sins only meant the canceling of a debt, one can imagine the Almighty drawing His pen across the pages of the ledger which countain the account, or tearing out the leaves and flinging them away. If it were one of penalty one can imagine a divine despot throwing justice and equity to the winds, and pardoning because he chose to do so. All such notions are shallow, and fail utterly to take account of the obstinate facts of existence. The real difference between God and men is that we are friends and kinsmen who have become estranged, and because the estrangement is due to our wanton fault. How can two estranged friends be brought together again in sweet affection, and what shall become of the cause of the estrangement?

Take an illustration: Your friend with whom you walked sweetly, whom you loved, and in

whom you confided, has turned and stabbed you. You are surprised and shocked. Or your friend in whom you believed has done a shameful deed. You have become aware of the fact, and he knows that you know it. How can you thereafter walk together as friends? What can be done to restore the old affection? Forgive him, and go on as you have been? You cannot forgive him; and, more than that, you ought not to forgive him. He who too readily condones a sin goes far toward committing the same sin. It is easy to mistake moral insensibility for spiritual charity. People often think they have forgiven a fault when the truth is their moral nature is too dense to be hurt by the fault.

It is at this point that the need for an atonement appears. The atonement is not a theological device. It is not a piece in a logical mosaic. It has its necessity in the nature of men, and in the nature of God. They are kinsfolk between whom wrong has made an estrangement. Yet they must go on living together. How shall they manage so that they can exist together throughout the centuries, throughout the eternities, in comfort? The atonement is the thing that we want, not the thing that God needs. Take another illustration: I knew, as who has not known, a young man in a trusted business position who abused the confidence of his big-hearted employer, and misappropriated the firm's money. As is always the case, the

time came when the head of the firm discovered the fault. He was indignant, and he was also heart-broken, because the fault was committed by a young man whom he loved. He had no desire to prosecute. He would a thousand times rather have replaced the money and kept the young man in the hope of his better future. The young man himself was repentant—deeply, poignantly repentant. He comes to me and says: "I can't face Mr. ——. If he were not so good as he is, I could go to him. If he were vindictive against my fault, I could stand up before him. But his goodness shames me. I can't look him in the face."

For what did this young man seek a mediator? He did not ask anyone to pay his debt. The debt could not be paid. The creditor didn't want it paid. What the offender really wished was someone who would vouch for the sincerity of his penitence. Christ for man is not the payer of a debt to an angry creditor. His cross is no scales upon whose arms is "weighed in balance true" the price of an offense. He is the friend, known and trusted by both parties in the moral transaction. He can vouch for the good will of the Almighty Father offended, and for the penitence of the man who has sinned. Indeed, the distinguishing mark of Christianity is the way in which it deals with men's sins. It does not profess to make restitution. It does not attempt to placate the Almighty with offer-

ings. It makes no pretense to obliterate the past. It rests upon the fact that God and men are of kindred nature, with like affections and emotions. It saves the sinner from moral despair, not by leading him to forget his own past, or by trying to persuade him that the facts of his life have ceased to be facts. Being led by the hand of Christ, the mediator, the man or woman who is grieved and wearied with the burden of his sins, who is tempted to follow the primal instinct and hide himself from God because he is naked, finds courage to uncover his shamed soul in the presence of God. A divine chemistry transmutes remorse into gratitude. It changes memory into adoration. The Christian becomes a new creature, but he does not cease to be the old. He understands that he is naked, but he is no longer ashamed, for he has passed into the light of the new paradise.

XLII.

JESUS THE PATH-FINDER.

"Follow me."—MATTHEW xvi. 24.

CHRISTIANITY takes for granted that all men are "lost." But it is well to understand distinctly that when it says lost, it does not mean condemned. It uses the word lost according to its simple, every-day meaning. A man is "lost" when he does not know where he is, or in which direction to turn. Jesus evidently conceives the situation to be something like this: Humanity is a company of people—men, women, and children—who are entangled in the mazes of a strange country. He seems to think of them in the world as we might think of a group of emigrants who have lost themselves in the midst of tropical Africa. The country about them is fair, but perilous. It is rich in resources and offers much gratification to the senses, but it is saturated with unseen miasmas. From out of its fair forests may emerge at any time ravening wild beasts. From its shady valleys may come at any moment forms worse than those of demons. They have explored the territory for a little way round about them. They have built themselves

habitations and have fallen into a routine of living. The children and the stupid ones among them are content with the situation. But the sober-minded and wise are deeply anxious for more light. Indeed, they, and they alone, are aware that their community is lost.

This seems to be Christ's conception of humanity. They are in the midst of a universe of which they are partial explorers, but of which they know little. They are exposed to dire perils of which they themselves are ignorant. They know not which way to turn in order that they may establish communication with the other inhabitants of the universe. It is to this situation that Christianity speaks. It is the reply to the needs of the men who are lost. It shows them how to live in the world, and it uncovers the path out of it.

These are really the two questions of religion. How ought I to live? What path is there to walk in when I shall have done living? Jesus Christ offers himself as the answer to both of these. His answer must needs be examined. It can only be put aside or ignored by stupid folk. His solution may be rejected, but to reject it without examination is folly. He comes so accredited that He must be listened to.

What, then, is His word to men who recognize that they are unable to solve the riddle of living, or who wish to know which way their faces shall turn on dying? To recur again to the simile of

the African emigrants: He does not offer to relieve them by giving a chart or any detailed description of the path they should take. In this is His difference from all other religious leaders of men. They have issued rules for living, a philosophy to be interpreted, a theology to be trusted. Jesus does none of these things. He says to the company of perplexed and frightened people: "Follow Me." That is, "Do as I do. As you watch Me, act as I act, think as I think, and live as I live, and thus you will escape from the perils and necessities of life as I escape from them." Christianity is the imitation of Christ.

Let us see, then, more narrowly what His manner of life was. A Hebrew carpenter, thirty years of age, renounces the joys of life and love to give himself solely to well-doing. He renounces them after having seen them. The psychology of the Temptation is marvelous. The possibilities of a triumphant life passed across the mirror of His mind as clear and sharp as a picture in the most brilliant sunlight. He verily saw the "kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them." He put them aside in obedience to a higher resolve, and what was the result? Poverty, disappointment, distress; the seeming failure of His plans.

He was outspoken for the truth against every lie. There was no guile in His mouth. His high resolve for true thinking matched His de-

termination for true doing. The result was that it put Him in the wrong with His family, with His church, with His neighbor, with His government. His kinsfolk said He was mad. His church said He was a blasphemer. His neighbor said He was a disturber of the peace. His government said He was a malefactor. His way of life incensed His fellows to such an extremity that at last by the practically unanimous consent of all concerned, He was put out of the way as a man who was too disagreeable to be allowed to live.

He submitted tamely to every wrong. He bore Himself toward His enemies as other men do toward their friends. Affront could not arouse Him, insult could not disturb Him—with the result that He was despised, reviled, cuffed, and in the end crucified. He does not at all disguise the difficulty and peril of the path in which He walked. It may cost fortune: "Sell all thou hast and follow Me." It may cost pain: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better so." It may cost the starvation of the affections: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." In his phrase it "brings a cross." "If any man determines to follow Me, let him take up his cross." This is the doctrine of the cross. But in the face of it all, He stands serenely looking at the lost company of lost humanity and says to them "Follow Me!"

In the presence of the hard facts of life there is the stubborn conviction that in a world like ours it is not safe to accept His leadership. Said a clear-minded and candid man: "I can't afford to be a Christian; it costs too much. If it only cost money that would be a trifle, but it seems to me that I could only be a Christian at the cost of all that makes life worth living. I am not ready to renounce the joys of life and love. I am not willing to be despised and rejected. His way may be divine and all that, but it is a way along which I am not prepared to follow Him."

What shall we say to this? Here is His invitation to follow. Here is the known difficulty of His path. What considerations will persuade or justify a reasonable man in walking under His leadership? In the first place, there is the strange fact that there is an imperious voice in the secret soul of every sane man which asserts that Jesus is right. The inmost nature of a man responds to Him. While the flesh shrinks from it, and the mind is perplexed at it, the spirit itself recognizes in the voice of the Master, not only the voice of God, but the voice of the most real humanity. To follow this innermost voice along His thorny path is the supreme act of faith. Faith in Christ is really not so much the assent to the truth of what He says, as it is the assent to the truthfulness of one's own innermost soul.

In the next place, there is the palpable fact that the evils of life can be overcome in no other way but this way. So far as they have yielded at all they have yielded to His weapons. It is by gentleness, patience, purity, and meekness that the world itself has gone forward. Force defeats itself. "The meek shall inherit the earth," is not alone prophecy; it is history. The measure of the progress of the race is its increasing gentleness. They that take the sword, shall perish by the sword. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Mr. Huxley asserts the absolute truth of these dicta as emphatically as does St. Paul. Says Mr. John Fiske: "In the cruel strife of centuries has it not often seemed as if the earth were to be rather the prize of the hardest heart and the strongest fist? To many men the words of Christ have been as foolishness and as a stumbling-block, and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount have been openly derided as too good for this world.

"In that wonderful picture of modern life which is the greatest work of one of the great seers of our time, Victor Hugo gives a concrete illustration of the working of Christ's methods. In the saint-like career of Bishop Myriel, and in the transformation which his example works in the character of the hardened outlaw, Jean Valjean, we have a most powerful commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. By some critics who could express their views freely about 'Les

Miserables,' while hesitating to impugn directly the authority of the New Testament, Monseigneur Bienvenu was unsparingly ridiculed as a man of impossible goodness, and as a milksop and a fool withal. But I think Victor Hugo understood the capabilities of human nature and its real dignity much better than these scoffers. In a low stage of civilization Monseigneur Bienvenu would have had small chance of reaching middle life.

"Christ, himself, we remember, was crucified between two thieves. It is none the less true that when once the degree of civilization is such as to allow this highest type of character, distinguished by its meekness and kindness, to take root and to thrive, its methods are incomparable in their potency. The Master knew well that the time was not yet ripe—that He brought not peace, but a sword. But He preached, nevertheless, that Gospel of great joy which is by and by to be realized by toiling humanity, and he announced ethical principles fit for the time that is coming."

XLIII.

GOD'S OPINION OF A MAN'S VALUE.

"How much then is a man better than a sheep?"—MATTHEW xii. 12.

THIS is the curious argument that our Lord addressed to the Jews in justification of His action in healing a man's withered hand on the Sabbath day. His works of healing seem to have been very frequent, and they do not appear to have excited very much surprise. He seems to have been thought of as a "fakeer" of unusual power. In the popular mind He does not appear to have been regarded otherwise than as a distinguished physician. But, according to the minute Jewish code, the physician was not allowed to do his work on the Sabbath day. In spite of this code Jesus healed the man's withered hand; healed him on the Sabbath day, and in the synagogue. He was at once charged with Sabbath-breaking. It was useless, as He knew, to appeal in the presence of such accusers to the real principle of the Sabbath day. He therefore made His argument to that sense which has always been keen in the Hebrew race. He appealed to their ideas of commercial value. He says to them: "You

yourselves will violate your code to save a sheep which has fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day. You do not do so from any sense of pity for the sheep, but because it is too valuable a thing to be permitted to be wasted. Now, a man is more valuable than a sheep."

This is His statement of the way in which God looks at men. He deems them intrinsically the most valuable of all His possessions. He seeks to save them not solely, maybe not primarily, moved by a feeling of compassion, but by regard to His own interest. There is an old proverb which says that "the worst use a man can be put to, is to be hanged." This proverb might be improved upon, and reverently placed in the mouth of God it would run: "The worst use that a man can be put to, is to be damned." It would seem to be clear that this is a use to which no man will be put if his owner can by any possibility avoid it.

The teaching of Jesus is that God holds all men and each man to be of practically infinite value. It is this estimate of humanity which has given the religion of Jesus such a hold upon men. It elevates them into a position of dignity which no other conception of religion at all approaches. It is true that it is an estimate which differs radically from that of many men accounted wise. Cæsar does not disguise his scornful estimate of "the greasy multitude." The Pharisee dismisses the whole mass of a generation with contempt as "knowing not the law, and therefore accursed."

Mr. Carlyle speaks of the population of England as "consisting of thirty millions, mostly fools." This contemptuous and un-Christ-like estimate of humanity has obtained, and does obtain, widely even within Christianity itself. The whole of the monastic system is built upon it. The popular theology of America is saturated with it. It shows itself in devotional literature, in hymns and prayers. It calls men "vile earth and miserable sinners," and forgets that this is the language of only a transient mood of religious feeling, and is not the Christian estimate of man. The idea of the Incarnation itself is based upon the intrinsic dignity and capability of humanity.

"How much," Jesus asks, "is a man better than a sheep?" How much?—and the unspoken reply evidently is, he is infinitely more valuable. He Himself insists always upon the intrinsic value of the individual soul. He does so both in His teaching and His action. He identifies Himself with the children of Adam by speaking of Himself habitually as the Son of Man. In the striking genealogy given by one of the evangelists, He is described as "the Son of David, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the Son of God." His estimate of humanity appears most strikingly in that marvelous trilogy of parables, the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son. The woman's single gold piece which had rolled away into a corner, and had been covered over and concealed with

dust and rubbish, and which had to be sought for with broom and candle, had remained gold during all the time of its concealment. By being lost it did not cease to be gold. It was sought for because it was precious in itself. Had it been worthless, the woman would not have taken the trouble, and her neighbors would not have joined her in the search for it. When the one silly sheep out of the hundred wandered into the wilderness, lost its way, was torn with brambles, was frightened by wolves, was thirsty and starving, it still remained a sheep. Its straying did not change it into a tiger, or even into a goat. The motive of the shepherd in leaving the ninety and nine to seek the one which was lost was not pity alone, but was at least in part, that he could not afford to lose it.

The prodigal youth in the far country, feasting among harlots, and starving among swine, did not lose his birthright. He remained throughout it all his father's son. The father's eyes never lost sight of him. It detected the first motion of the boy toward return. The father kept sight of him in all his wanderings, and rejoiced at his return, because the contentment of his own existence was marred and could not be easy until his child was brought home again. This is the teaching of Jesus concerning the way in which our Father in Heaven estimates His children on earth. When He looked abroad upon the multitude He was filled with compassion because they

were "as sheep without a shepherd." They were not only suffering, but they were being wasted. When He looks again over the same multitude He thinks of the field of grain ripe for the harvest, but for which there are no reapers. He cannot abide the thought of the waste of so much good wheat. His practice was like His theory. No one can think of Him as a demagogue, yet no one ever spoke of men in such high terms concerning themselves. The common people—that is, the average man—heard it gladly because his own consciousness assented to the truth of Jesus' thought.

This truth has been greatly obscured by a pestilent mock humility. The notion is current that the more one reviles and pours contempt upon human nature the more he exalts the pity and compassion of God. It is true that there are certain moods of the soul in which it is overwhelmed with a sense of its own unworthiness. But this sense of unworthiness is itself the proof that the subject of it is conscious of his relationship to the Almighty. It is only a being really possessed of infinite capacities which can be so overwhelmed with a sense of its shortcoming as find expression in the abject confessions of prayer and liturgy.

If it be objected that this estimate of the intrinsic value of all men in the sight of God tends to obscure the distinction between the "saved" and the "lost," between the Church and the

world, the reply is, that no one who really considers the matter can venture to think that some men are deemed valuable by God and others deemed worthless.

This conception of human worth lies at the root of all earnest efforts toward human reform. What most men need to induce them to struggle upward to their own high ideal, is a sense of hopefulness. It is greatly to be feared that much of the teaching and speaking about religion tends to apathy rather than to action. Any man who becomes seriously convinced that his own human nature—the only nature which he possesses—is accounted contemptible by God, will despair in advance of ever being God's friend. This is really the skepticism which paralyzes men's religious effort. It is not disbelief in God, it is disbelief in themselves. Having become possessed of the un-Christian notion that they are, as men, on a level with the worms, instead of "only a little lower than the angels," they fear to set forward along a path which seems to them to be so extended that their will fails them.

What prevents men from attempting the religion of Christ is an antecedent hopelessness. It is true that salvation is by "grace," but it is also true that the grace of God offers itself to creatures which He regards, not as reptiles or as demons, but as children of his own blood.

XLIV.

THE DEVIL.

"Then was Jesus . . . tempted of the devil."—MATTHEW iv. 1.

WHO is the devil? What is the devil? Is there any devil?

The mere asking these questions soberly and sermonwise is likely to startle certain persons. For, if skepticism concerning God is widespread, skepticism concerning the devil is practically universal. Can any serious-minded man maintain the existence of a conscious, personal spirit of evil?

It is true that the figure under which the devil is presented before the imagination is one which has come to be seen to be grotesque and childish. Nevertheless, the fact that an idea has been inadequately or falsely presented does not show that the idea itself is without foundation in fact. We believe in the devil. That is to say, we believe in the actual existence, in this universe, of an intelligence controlling and directing the kingdom of evil, which intelligence can only be regarded as personal because it operates so much like other personalities operate. Why do we countenance such a piece of superstition? It is

true that the devil is the first piece of supernaturalism which the modern Sadducee throws overboard in his attempt to lighten ship. When we decline to dismiss the conception we are called upon to give some sensible reason for doing so.

Of course, the fact that any belief has been entertained through all times and by all peoples does not prove its truth. The world has been unanimously mistaken more than once. It thought once that the sun moved and the earth stood still; it was mistaken, but this and all similar errors are not due to stupidity or to superstition. They are due to the existence of things that look like facts, and are facts for all practical purposes, until they are differently explained. Now, the belief in the existence of superhuman spirits of evil is one of the universal instincts. No nation or tribe or people is without it. In our every-day thinking and speaking there is no personage more frequently alluded to, and whose name is more familiar even to hard-headed men of science than that of the devil.

It is at least a curious fact that the three great poems of the three great languages revolve about the personality of Satan. Dante, Milton, and Goethe have all sung of the devil. It is true they sang a good while ago, but it is clearly true that their songs were the songs of genius, and genius is not limited by time. But what difference does it make whether one has a place in his creed for the devil or not? I reply, that,

in the first place, this idea is so closely associated with a number of other religious beliefs that when one of them disappears the others are likely to disappear with it. Angels, devils, and spirits are thoughts which entangle one another. One begins by casting out the devil from his theology, and he may wake to the discovery later on that his angels have flown away, the Divine Spirit has become inconceivable, and he comes finally to question the independent essential existence of his own soul. The dark things of life seem to require a personal explanation in much the same way as do the orderly and bright ones. Whatever belief in God comes from the so-called "argument of design" would seem to be associated with a belief in the existence of personal evil, to which the same argument leads.

Then, again, the way in which one speaks and thinks of the mysteries of spiritual evil is a sort of index of the way in which he conceives of the nature of sin. When Burns, in his address to the Deil, says,

> "Oh, thou, whatever title suit thee,
> Auld Hornie, Nick, or Cloven Clootie,"

one discerns in his flippant words the spirit of a man who has little if any serious notion of the evil quality of sin. He who dismisses, therefore, this current belief may well inquire whether or not he has dismissed with it his sense of sin. It might be better for him to believe in a devil, the

conventional devil with horns and hoofs and forked tail, rather than to believe not at all in the fact of moral wrong, which even popular ignorance has thus personified.

As a matter of fact, this belief is so intertwined with all religious thought and phraseology, that even if it should become necessary in the interest of truth to dissect it out, there would be serious peril of destroying the adjacent tissues. Satan, the same indefinite personage, comes in sight at every step in the progress of religious belief. He is implicated in creeds and articles and confessions just as he is expressed in popular speech and in the literature of Holy Scripture. The development of the doctrine of the devil runs curiously parallel with the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ. The two beliefs emerge slowly in the course of the centuries. At first both conceptions are vague, formless, and elusive. But little by little they become coherent and well articulated. The one expresses itself in Christ, while the other culminates in the person of that strange and mysterious evil intelligence which confronts Him in the wilderness, and tempts Him with all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof. No sober-minded, religious man who has seriously pondered the question will be greatly disturbed by the grotesque and childish conceptions of the devil which are current among the vulgar. It may be that the popular ideas of the devil are about as true to the facts in the case

as are the popular conceptions of God. But the thoughtful man does not throw away his belief in God because foolish men fail to catch it, or because they caricature it. This universe is a spacious place. It is hard to believe that its sentient inhabitants are confined to the human population of a single planet. One cannot believe that so enormous and elaborate a universe could have been constructed, and could be maintained for such a comparatively trivial purpose. It would seem more likely in advance that the universe is populated with spiritual beings. It is easy to see, at any rate, that in the portion of existence with which we are familiar, spiritual evil is as real a fact as is spiritual good. It is not, therefore, difficult to believe that wrong is organized, and in some strange way is directed to its own purpose by an intelligent master.

But what of it? Can any blast of pestilential breath come from the abyss to blight the soul? As we walk through the little paths of our intelligent existence, do we come within speaking distance of any extra-human intelligence living at the same time? In a word, is it possible, or even conceivable, that any spirit of evil can trouble and cloud the currents which spring and flow from the source of our own consciousness? Men can speak to us and we can understand and be interested. God can whisper to our souls, and we can yield to His suggestions, or can refuse. Can any spirit of evil suggest his mischievous

ideas by any secret process to our souls? We touch here the extreme border of the mystery of living. Can any living intelligence speak to any other living intelligence except through the medium of the senses? This is the belief which lies at the root of all religion. It believes that spirit can touch spirit, independent of material vehicle. But if this be so, then the human soul must walk exposed to the solicitations of personal evil as well as to the gentle urgings of the Divine Spirit.

The belief in the fact of a personal spirit of evil, and of the possibility of its contact with the human soul, brings unspeakable relief to the problem of personal righteousness. It enables the man who is struggling after holiness to separate himself from his sin. For if one is deeply persuaded that the evil which he is conscious of within him is the true and essential expression of his own inmost self, then he must despair of reaching righteousness. Says Dr. Dale: "Evil thoughts come to us, which are alien from all our convictions, and all our sympathies. There is nothing to account for them in our external circumstances, or in our intellectual life. We abhor them, but they are pressed upon us with cruel persistency. They come to us at times when their presence is most hateful."

We are sometimes pursued and harassed by doubts which we have deliberately confronted, examined, and concluded to be absolutely desti-

tute of force; doubts about the very existence of God, about the authority of Christ, about the reality of our own redemption. Temptations to lust or dishonor seem to lie in wait for us. They trip us up. They seem to wait for opportunity to take us unawares. The sane man knows that these temptations are real, and that they do not come from his own, real, inner self. He knows the evil of his own soul. If he believes that this evil is all an intrinsic part of himself, he has the feeling that to eliminate it would be little less than suicide.

If he comes, on the other hand, into a belief which enables him, when he is tempted, to say with St. Paul, "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me," then he can set about the task of driving out the sin without fear of losing his own identity. "Beware of your adversary the devil," is good counsel, good sense, as well as good religion. The soul seeking after righteousness must take account of all the facts of his spiritual surroundings. The "Man most man" was not exempt from the necessity. Let one conceive of the devil as he will, whether in the abused form of popular notion, or under the metaphysical guise of philosophy, he still remains a fact to be taken account of. He is not omnipotent, his wisdom is often folly. He over-reaches himself. He can be driven away. He can be resisted. But he is the expression of a consciousness which lies at the very heart of man.

XLV.

TRUTH AND GOODNESS.

"The faith . . . once delivered unto the saints."—JUDE 3.

THERE are probably few verses in Holy Scripture which have been compelled to do duty for which they never were intended as this one has. It is common to hear it used as though it meant "The Creed was once for all given to the Church." But the Faith is not the same as the Creed, and unfortunately, the saints are not quite identical with the Church. If it has to be paraphrased at all, it would be nearer correct to say "The Faith was formerly, is now, and ever shall be understood by the holy." The power to understand the truth of God is dependent upon moral goodness.

There is such a thing, however, as the Faith, used in the popular sense. That is to say, there is a body of facts, or what we believe to be facts —as for example, the birth of Jesus of the Virgin Mary, under Pontius Pilate, His crucifixion, His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into heaven. These we believe to be facts which have their place in space and time. They are part of history. There is a body also of a different

kind of truths which are not related to history. We believe, for example, in God. We believe that He has in the past, and does now, communicate with human souls. We believe in prayer—that it is not an unreasonable thing for a man to speak words which are expected to awaken a response in the mind and the heart of the Almighty. We believe in the forgiveness of sins—that is to say, in the possibility of a man's undoing the evil which he has done, and escaping its consequences, though not its poison. These truths might be added to considerably. I have not tried to enumerate all the articles of the Christian Faith. It is enough to give these as instances of what I mean. The sum total of them all is, for this purpose, "The Faith." Some are profoundly convinced of the truth of the faith, others deny it, and many are doubtful. This makes it worth while to ask the questions—How does anyone know these things? How were these truths, if they are truths, originally reached? How can they now be proved to be true?

In other spheres the methods of reaching truth are very obvious. In the physical sciences one reaches truth by patient investigation, experiment, and discovery. The physicist in his laboratory, with his test tubes and apparatus, makes experiment after experiment for the purpose of ascertaining whether a thing which he suspects to be true is really true. He corrects his experiments one by another. He reads in

books the account of experiments which other men have made. He profits by others' failures, while he annexes every success. As the result of it all there emerges a new fact. Having been attained, it is set in the category with other scientific facts, and becomes a part of the "Faith of Science." The sociologist pursues substantially the same method. He studies whole classes of people, gathers statistics, formulates them, sifts them, digests them. He observes, travels, inquires, and as a result he reaches the truth. This truth becomes a portion of the Faith of Political economy. One ascertains the truth about the interior of Africa by going there, or by contributing to send someone else there, who looks with his own eyes at the facts, and reports them, which become thereupon part of the Faith of Geography. In a word, in every department of human life the truth is either invented, or discovered, or accumulated. Will these methods operate in the region of religious truth? Who, by searching, can find out God? Who, by experimenting, can understand the Incarnation? Who, by observation, can come to a knowledge of the truth of self-sacrifice, of purity, of miracles, of the resurrection of the dead? The methods of attaining truths with which we are familiar, and which are so potent, seem to become impotent the moment we attempt to apply them to this class of beliefs.

To whom, then, does the faith of Christianity

lie open and evident? Pilate intimated that there is no such thing, that it is all a question of words and empty imaginings, not worth the serious consideration of a practical man. The secularist offers to demonstrate the falsity of religious beliefs by experiment. All will remember the stir which was caused a good many years ago by Professor Tyndall's offer to subject the efficacy of prayer to a practical test. His proposition was that in a well-known hospital of London the occupants of the beds in a certain ward should ask the prayers of the whole religious world. The occupants in the beds in a corresponding ward should be left not prayed for; the same skillful treatment should be applied to them both. After a reasonable time should have elapsed, it would be seen whether or not those for whose recovery prayers had been offered had actually recovered in a larger percentage than those left without the benefit of prayers. It goes without saying that the challenge was not accepted, but it was not clear to many then, and is not yet clear, why the challenge was essentially an absurd one. The dogmatist from the other side of the circle agrees with the secularist that religious truth is not discoverable. It is given, as he says, by "revelation." That is to say, it is let down from heaven in the whole piece and by the arbitrary determination of God, and if it were not thus displayed it would remain for men non-existent.

Our text is the key to the perplexity. The Christian Faith can be put to the test and can be added to, but this can only be done by the methods and by the persons who are fitted to do it. No one will question that the existence of religious belief is a fact. There are myriads actually living of men and women who are quite as certain of God as they are of themselves. They are as confident of the life to come as they are of the life which now is. They are more sure of the absolute reality of self-sacrifice, purity, and the Christian way of life generally, than they are about the facts of science, sociology, or commerce. How, then, has this faith, which they hold so confidently, been achieved? The reply is not difficult. That literature which we call the Holy Scripture contains the history of very much, though not all, of the Christian faith. That literature is not itself a "revelation" so much as it is a history of the way in which God's revelation has been given and has been received. Much of it is in the form of biography. The characteristics of the men who have seen the truth, and have made it to be seen by others, stand out clearly.

If we look steadfastly at the men through whom God's truth has come, we will be able to see why it has come to them, and through them, and has not been sent by others. What, for example, is the mark of Abraham, the father of the faithful? He came out of the midst of a

high but godless civilization. Those he left behind him in the Akkadian city were in many ways wiser men than he. There were scholars, philosophers, poets, warriors among them. Nevertheless, their contribution to humanity has been forgotten, while Abraham's is still cherished. The thing which marked him was his genius for goodness. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, to be sure, but his gift to men was not due to this. In fact, it was not until he had dwelt a long while in the wilderness alone with God that he was fitted to be the religious guide of men. He saw the truth because he was good. The prophets were men without learning, with no power of speculation, with little logic. They were government officials, vine dressers, shepherds, farmers, and beggars. But they were the windows through which God's light shone, and has been shining all these ages. They were prophets because they were good. The group that gathered about Jesus, Simeon and Anna, and Mary and John, gathered about Him because they had the faculty to which He spoke. They became Christians because they were already good. Faith is the outcome of goodness. "The pure in heart shall see God." "If any man be determined to do my will, he shall know of my doctrine." It is the constant law among the phenomena of religion that the conviction of the truth of spiritual things is only possible to those who are in sympathy with the moral nature of

God. "The faith is delivered to the saints"—and to them alone.

One cannot shut his eyes to the feeling of disappointment which the statement of this law creates. There are many who object: "You say, then, that one must be good before he becomes satisfied of the truth of religion? This empties religion of all practical usefulness. I am keenly alive to my own badness. I am deeply sensible of the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of being good. The very purpose for which I seek religion is that I shall by it be enabled to be good, as without it I am left bad." The difficulty must remain. It is inherent in the nature of things. "Show us a sign," said Christ's contemporaries, "and we will believe." If one rose from the dead they would believe. Jesus settled the matter once for all by his declaration that they would not believe even though one rose from the dead.

It is impossible in the nature of things for the evil man to be convinced of the truths of religion. He simply cannot believe them to be true. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are astray." It addresses itself to the moral faculties. This is the only equitable way. If religious belief was contingent upon intellectual capacity, men would stand toward it in positions of unequal advantage. There are some who can be wise, and there are some who cannot. This is very largely a matter of accident and environ-

ment. But all have, to some degree at least, the capacity for goodness. Christ addresses Himself to this capacity. Experience has abundantly shown that it is present in the case of the unlearned, the simple, as really as it is in the learned and great. It is a faculty capable of infinite cultivation, but no one is without it. Therefore, it is in keeping with God's infinite fair dealing, that faith is God's gift to sanctity.

XLVI.

THE TWIN LAWS.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—MATTHEW xxii. 40.

IT is very commonly assumed that religion is one thing, and that morality is another. One says of an acquaintance, "No, he is not a religious man, but he is perfectly moral." It would look as though this distinction did really exist. There are these two kinds of men. The distinction would seem to be in the decalogue itself. It contains two "tables," one pertaining to God, and the other to men. Jesus was asked in his day to say which He deemed the more important. "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" And he answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God absolutely; thou shalt love thy neighbor absolutely; on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." On these two; they may not be separated. If they be built upon, apart from one another, the structure will not stand.

Now, unfortunately, they have been separated. One class of good men rests upon one of them,

and another class upon another. The one contains many religious women, and some religious men. The other contains many moral men, and some moral women. The ideal of goodness is not the same in the two classes. The first puts God in the foreground of its goodness; the other puts man in the front. A few strokes will outline the two characters. The "religious" man wishes above all things to be right with God. He attaches great importance to creed. He must do so, for to his mind all his destiny is staked upon loving God, and therefore he must have a precise notion of who and what God is. This he draws out into a system of theology. He classes it as the "queen of the sciences." He loves clear definitions, and is impatient of any vagueness or uncertainty in the faith. He reverences the Church, and bows to its rule. But he does not think of the Church so much as a society for the betterment of the world, as a corporation for the maintenance of the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." To his mind the essence of religion is a deep, overwhelming experience of love for God! This is the "religious" man, and he is very well known.

The other class has man in mind, rather than God, in its attempt to attain goodness. It tries to do rightly. It is keenly alive to the relationships which men bear to one another. It tries to so adjust itself to these relationships as will bring out the greatest good of the greatest

number. Such a man is honest, chaste, truthful, compassionate. He is often active in charitable work, and is still more likely to endow some beneficence when he makes his will. He is easily touched by any story of human want, but he can pass through the fiercest "revival" without being moved. There could hardly be more perfect types of these two classes than the late Cardinal Newman and the late Professor Huxley. One was pre-eminently religious, and the other a master of morals. They were utterly incomprehensible by one another. One cannot help thinking that the cardinal did in his secret heart regard the professor as the Antichrist. Indeed, he has left on record in his Apologia that the thing from which he fled in horror was "liberalism; and by liberalism I mean the movement of the whole modern educated world." Professor Huxley's opinion of theology is too well known to need quoting.

Here is a most unfortunate estrangement between two kinds of good men. That the two named were supremely good men, is beyond question. Only a bigot or a doctrinaire would wish to detract from the goodness of either of them. The deplorable thing is their severance. They need each other. Each has half a truth, but only half.

The estrangement was originally due to the action of those who stood for religion, rather than of those who represented morals. Ever

since Augustine's time Theology has been more perplexed with the natural goodness, than with the natural badness, of men. It has denied that natural goodness was good, and has vilified it. It has ventured to say that "works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit are not pleasant to God, for as much as they spring not out of faith in Jesus Christ; and because they are not done as God has willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin!" That is to say, mother love and brave, brotherly deeds done by the "unconverted" have the nature of sin! No church assembly or council would venture or wish to-day to adopt such a formulary. But, alas, the error from which it sprang is sufficiently widespread to keep the falsehood from being thrown out of Article and Confession of Faith. It is only in our own day that morals has taken religion at its own word. Now it is seeking for itself an independent "scientific" basis. This cleavage of the heart of goodness is suicidal. There are not two kinds of goodness in the universe, but only one. Religion and morality are the same thing. We are brethren, indeed, dwelling in our Father's house. The interplay of affection must take in both Father and brothers. If we are not children of the same Father, then we are not brethren at all, and prating about loving one's fellow-men becomes empty talk. Why should we put ourselves out

to oblige any man? Why should we share with him? Why should we spare him if he stand in our way? There is no reason, unless he be the child of the same Father. And even then there is little reason, if one has no affection for his Father.

This separation of the two commandments is bad every way. It makes religion a far-off, vague, mystical thing, which does not concern actual living. It leaves morals without any sufficient motive or basis. It separates good men into alien camps. It detaches practical men from God, and leaves the best planned schemes for human good without enthusiasm. At no time in the history of the race have men been so intent upon their duty to their fellows as to-day. Does any suffer? at once a society is organized for his relief. Is any class oppressed? at once a movement for their alleviation. There is an institution for the care of almost any description of destitute. Yet the stress of the situation seems to be steadily growing more strained. All deplore alike man's inhumanity to man at the very time when the whole energy of the time seems to be given to the study of human relations. The Church languishes and vainly essays to recover her strength by new definitions of doctrine. Morals grow slack, even among those who are professed students of economics and anthropology. What is the matter? Even this: by a fatal error—the blame of which may be laid

equally at the door of religion and morals—a separation has been made of those things which God has joined together. The love for God and the love for men combined yield the fruit of righteousness.

XLVII.

THINK OF THE CHILDREN.

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."—EZEKIEL xviii. 2.

IN the old saws and proverbs of a people are compressed its hereditary wisdom. The Jews were very partial to this style of speech. Some of their proverbs are exceedingly striking. The text is one of the homeliest of all of them. It contains their testimony to one of the hardest truths of life—that is, that the children suffer for their parents' faults. The "sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." I do not propose to vindicate the fairness or equity of this law. God knows how to govern His own universe. But this is one of the facts of human life which have to be taken account of. We are the heirs of all the ages, and our inheritance brings with it much of the evil which has been caused by the faults and follies of those from whom we take our estate. When one soberly considers the situation of things he sees that it could not be otherwise. It is simply a part of the law of heredity. Humanity is not simply

an aggregate of innumerable individuals thrown together like oranges in a basket. It is a living organism, and each part of it is affected directly or indirectly by the life of every other part of it. No single generation is independent. Its roots are in the generation which went before, and its fruits are in the generation which comes after. But it is not with the general law of transmission of penalty that we are concerned to-day: it is with one special application of it.

There are thousands of men and women to-day who are in a very unique religious condition. They are approaching middle life; they are the sons and daughters of simple, orthodox parents. During the last twenty-five years a number of things have occurred in the region of religion which make it difficult for them to be Christians in the same way that their fathers and mothers were. The discoveries of science, the movements of literature, the changes of domestic habits, the criticism of the Bible, and a hundred other things have arisen which have separated them from their old religion. Some of them regard this with great distress. Where this feeling is present it indicates an earnest nature, which may be trusted sooner or later to find out his true relation to divine things. With this sort of person I am not now concerned. But there is another class, altogether too numerous, who do not seem to realize at all the importance of the religious side of life. In many cases they have lightly dismissed the

whole matter; their time is engrossed with their business, their profession, their society, and they do not concern themselves at all about either their own personal religion or about the moral betterment of society. Meanwhile, they are attracted temporarily by various quasi-religious fads. They tamper with what they are pleased to call "agnosticism." Sometimes they dabble in "Christian Science." A few of the more earnest-minded among them have taken up Ethical Culture, and a good many have gone into charitable and philanthropic work. Some have made a religion of "the Single Tax." A few stray ones are interested in the occult mysteries of the Orient. But most content themselves with railing at the defects of Christianity and the errors of religious doctrine.

Now, my purpose is not to point out the weakness or falsity or worthlessness of any of these cults. Any careful observer can see, however, that none of these or all of them together satisfy the spiritual hunger of those who feed upon them. They are grapes, but they are sour grapes. If one chooses to eat them, no one can say him nay. But I wish in all earnestness to call attention to one of the consequences of this line of action, which possibly they have not considered. These persons are good, honest, upright, honorable men and women. Even when they think that they have lost sight of God they still do actually live in the fear of God. They

inherit from the generation which went before them a strenuous religious sense. The last generation may have been—and, indeed, was—noncritical and largely unenlightened; but it possessed that thing which is the characteristic of orthodoxy—strong religious conviction. The conviction may not have been well founded, but they thought it was, and they fashioned their own lives and the lives of their households by it. Our generation inherited from them much of the religiousness upon which it is now living.

But we also have children. What will be the effect of our religious or non-religious attitude upon our sons and daughters? Take a case. Here is a man, a lawyer, a physician, a business man, between forty and fifty years of age. He was raised in a Christian household. Before he was twenty he joined the Church. He did so, being moved thereto partly by that emotion of mystery which is always awakened in a soul when it stands at the threshold of its own personal career, and moved partly by the earnest counsel or entreaty of his father and mother, minister and Sunday-school teacher. For a considerable time he was an earnest member and communicant in Christ's Church. But as the years have gone on he has lost many illusions. He has been confronted with intellectual difficulties. Little by little he has drifted away from all his former relations to religion. His household has in it no altar and no shrine.

He and his children sit down to their table without prayer, and arise without thanks. On Sunday he reads the newspaper, goes driving, and allows his children to do as they please. The question I wish to raise and hold before such a man is; what does he really wish his children to be, religiously? Does he wish them to be without God in the world, or not? Does he or does he not believe that they possess the same spiritual faculty and capacity which he possesses? Does he or does he not wish that faculty to dwindle in them and disappear for lack of use? Will the spiritual food upon which he is now living, and which he confesses to be unsatisfactory—will it be wholesome for his children? He wishes for them the best that can be, both in this life and for any life that may be hereafter.

It is seriously to be feared that we, as a generation, are preparing great unhappiness, as well as moral confusion, for our children and our children's children. I do not disguise the fact that a new religious adjustment is necessary in our generation. Many things which our fathers believed in we cannot believe. Many things which they felt bound to do, we feel bound not to do. There are grave defects in the traditional theology. There are grave errors in the traditional way of regarding the Bible. The Church has many things to learn and many things to unlearn. Nevertheless, or rather for those very reasons, it would seem to be the part of honor

and good sense, as well as the part of affection and solicitude for one's children, to seriously re-examine the truth of God as shown forth in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the hope of drawing therefrom a spiritual sustenance which will be wholesome for ourselves and which will not leave our children with a bitter taste in their mouths. Jesus offers Himself as the bread and the water of life. There is no doubt that to many He proves but a dry and tasteless thing. I sympathize deeply with the man who has once found stay and stimulus in Him, and has for any reason ceased to do so. He is in an evil case. But let him be assured that it is because his taste has become sophisticated, and not because the Bread of the world has ceased to be wholesome. In the fever of living his spiritual sense has become disordered. Let him seek for recovery, and meanwhile, in the name of all that is honorable and manly, let him see to it that his children do not become diseased or starved through his action.

XLVIII.

GOD'S BOUNTY.

"He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."—Acts xiv. 17.

Taking the world altogether, it never has more than about three months' provision of grain in its garner. The failure of a single harvest all over the world would depopulate the earth. It has never enough laid up at any one time to keep it from starving during the ensuing four months. It would seem to be evident that God does not intend that men should become independent of Him. They cannot get enough ahead at any one time to set up for themselves. He feeds them from time to time, as they may need. He does so by the continual recurring succession of seed-time and harvest.

The feeling which possesses the community at Thanksgiving time springs out of the fact that I have stated. The service for the day has its root in the soil. It blesses God "who covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth the rain for the earth, and maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herbs for the use of man;

who giveth fodder unto the cattle, and filleth the people with the flour of wheat." It gives "unfeigned thanks and praise to God for the return of seed-time and harvest, for the increase of the ground, and the gathering in of the fruits thereof." It rests upon the idea of God's constantly renewed bounty. Christianity sees in all this the constant witness to God. This was Jesus' view of the situation. He was an interpreter. He did not make facts. He uncovered their meaning.

Now, so far, God's provision for man has never ceased to be a fact. Harvests have failed here and there. Droughts have oppressed in this place and that place. Famine has paid visits. But take it altogether, seed-time and harvest, thus far, have not failed. At any rate, they have never failed to such an extent that the provisions accumulated in the world's storehouse have not been sufficient to tide it over. Man's table has been spread with abundance. His larder has been kept filled.

Nevertheless, it has happened, and is happening all the time, that thousands and tens of thousands are hungry, and that thousands upon thousands are in a chronic condition of anxiety and narrowness of means which prevents them from being thankful. A smaller group, at the other end of the scale, reach out their hands and draw to themselves the share of provision which, by an equal distribution of things, should belong to those who are hungry. The motive of Thanks-

giving, therefore, is difficult to catch. It is difficult for two reasons. First, because in the artificial condition of society in which we live, we are so remote from the processes by which God fills the world's garner with grain. And in the second place, because the machinery for the distribution of His bounty has not succeeded in distributing it equitably. It is hard for one who lives in the city to understand the song of the husbandman and the vine-dresser. The good things of life come to us through such a succession of middlemen, and through such a complicated machinery, that we find difficulty in referring them to their true source. All the machinery of trade and commerce, and transportation and law, exists for the purpose ultimately of "moving the crops." God gives them, men distribute them. But we, receiving them at the hands of the last agent, find it hard to realize that they do really come from God. We find it all the more difficult to realize this, because, for some reason or other, we do not receive our proper proportion. We receive too much, or too little, and in either case, the emotion of thankfulness will not arise. Neither the man who has more than he ought to have, nor he who has less, is ever thankful. They cannot be in the nature of the case—for either they have abused God's bounty, or they have failed to receive it.

The problem which is being considered and discussed more than any other in our generation,

is that of "the distribution of wealth." The feeling is widespread that it is not properly apportioned. There is no question of its abundance. The banquet of life is bountifully spread, but it is said that one man gorges himself, while five men cannot secure places at the table. A hundred explanations are given of the fact, and a hundred remedies are suggested. There are not a few who arraign the whole social, commercial, and industrial system in terms of unmeasured denunciation. Whole libraries of books upon economics have been published. Statistics have been collected whose columns make one's head whirl. The problem has been studied in the slums, on the farms, and in the factories, in colleges, in churches. Much has been said which are but wild, whirling words. Much of folly has been spoken, and much of mischief.

The cures proposed have been often fantastic, and not seldom dangerous. Many a rich man has been rendered uneasy in the possession of his wealth. Very many who are called rich, are troubled in their consciences. No one has as yet even suggested the practical machinery or methods by which an equitable distribution shall be secured. But, in spite of all this, the spirit which is causing these obstinate questionings is a true spirit, and of God. It is not anarchy, and it is not working toward anarchy. It is steadily and surely working toward justice and equity. It is not working rapidly, but it is working

surely. Even causes which seem to be remote therefrom are being constantly used by God to bring in His kingdom. Says Mr. Edward Atkinson: "Since 1865 greater progress has been made in providing means to insure the proper distribution of the necessities of life than in all the years preceding." Men are every year coming to be a little better fed, a little more comfortably housed, a little better clad, and to work a little shorter time each day. It is not true that "the rich are growing richer, and the poor are growing poorer." The distribution of God's bounty is yet very far from that which He would have, but it is better than it ever has been in the past.

It is desirable on all accounts that this movement toward better distribution should be carried to completion. Of course, it will not be brought to its ideal perfection in our day, or anything like it. But some advance can be made, and is being made. The problem is, How to distribute God's bounty? It is a life and death problem for society. Two or three solutions are offered as final. One says: "Let each man snatch what he can and hold on to it." Another says. "Let the State take possession of it all, and distribute it by law." The great majority do not accept either of these answers, but proceed under the actual necessities of life. They recognize that the wise, and the strong, and the thrifty will secure more than the foolish, the weak, and

the profligate. They think they ought to receive more. They will not endure any legal arrangement which will render these virtues impotent, or put them on the same level of reward as their opposite vices. They are willing, however, that the law of competition should be modified to a very great degree in the interest of society as a whole.

Just to what extent this modification shall be carried, and what practical form it shall take, is the question which is in our day being threshed out by argument, and still more by experiment. Many contribute to the solution who do not intend to do so. It is said that the elder Mr. Vanderbilt, while amassing a fortune for himself, incidentally reduced the cost of bringing a barrel of flour from the West to the East from two dollars to twenty-five cents. If this be true, it is probable that this improvement could not have been secured at any cheaper rate than to allow him to pile up his own millions while he was doing it. Mr. Debs said the other day that he would organize and lead no more strikes. It may well be that the expense of his trial to the State and the pain of his imprisonment to himself was the cheapest terms upon which the influence of such a man could be secured for the real good of society. In fact the good that men do is not always the good which they intend to do, or that they think they are doing. But good they do all the same.

The problem is, How to distribute God's bounty? The first condition to its solution is that men shall recognize that the good things of life are God's bounty. "Labor" is fond of saying: "We create wealth by our hands, therefore it is ours." "Capital" is fond of saying: "We create wealth by our brains, therefore it is ours."

They are both wrong. Neither of them creates wealth. It is poured out from the bounteous hand of God. If it be objected that this is introducing the religious sentiment into a purely material problem, I reply, the problem never has been solved, never will be, except as this sentiment is satisfied. Said Mr. Lincoln: "Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right." The reason is, right is the most imperious force in God's universe, for it is God Himself. It will overturn and overturn and overturn, until He comes whose right it is to reign. Only in proportion as men realize that they are all alike children seated at their Father's table, will they cease to snatch, and will begin each to serve another before himself.

XLIX.

THE TYRANNY OF BUSINESS.

"The love of money is the root of all evil."—1 Timothy vi. 10.

The apostle here makes a very sweeping assertion. It is probably not precisely correct, and was not intended by its author to be taken for the face of it. But it comes nearer the truth than anything else that could be said on the subject. If the love of money is not the origin of all evil, it is without doubt the origin of more evil than can be referred to any other source. It is no sin to be rich. Abraham was rich. St. Bernard was rich. George Washington was, if not the richest, at any rate one of the two or three richest men in America. It is even possible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is possible, but not easy. If he do so at all he does it like a camel which squeezes through a gate too narrow for it, which is likely to scrape off all of its burden and some of its fat if it persists in squeezing through. The apostle does not say that money is the root of all evil, but that the lust for money is.

There is no country in the world where there

goes on as fierce and relentless a scramble to get rich as in the United States. There is very good reason for this—or, to speak more accurately, there are reasonable explanations of it. In other countries and in other times it has been possible for men to secure what they valued most in life without being rich. If it were social pre-eminence which they valued, they reached it by birth. If it were power they coveted, they could attain it by strength of character and brains. In the United States there is practically only one standard of success. The man who gets rich succeeds. The man who does not get rich is counted more or less a failure. Money will buy things in America which it will buy nowhere else. It will buy social consideration; it will buy power. And these are the two most alluring objects of man's ambition. Speaking broadly, there is no avenue to social success except wealth. It is true that in some places, pre-eminently in this city, it is possible for one who has a place in society to retain that place after he loses his money. But even with these exceptions, the general statement may be made that one can only hold his place so long as he is able to pay for it. This fact, and others which co-operate with it, have led to a widespread, fierce, persistent, and unresting struggle for money, the like of which the world has never seen. It lays a burden too heavy to be borne upon men's bodies and upon their souls. Thou-

sands who are in the midst of it are sick and tired to death of the unceasing toil. But they see no way to escape from it, and they see no way to attain the ends of life if they relax. The struggle for wealth has come to be an overshadowing blight upon high and noble things. It is wearing out men's hearts, wearing out their bodies, racking their brains, and becoming an intolerable tyranny. It is not confined to any particular class; from the greatest to the least we are all together in the same scramble.

Now, at least some of the evils of this intense longing for wealth need only be mentioned in order to be seen. What is the explanation, for instance, of the bad government of cities, which we all agree in deploring? The notion is often entertained that it is because the great mass of well-meaning and well-wishing citizens are outwitted and captured by a small company of conscienceless politicians; that people desire good government, but are not able to secure it. The theory does not fit the fact. The true explanation of the political evil is so simple and palpable that men are not willing to see it. The reason why a city is badly administered is because its individual citizens are too much engrossed in making money to find time or thought or energy to cure the evils of which they complain. At this moment a city is convulsed by a conflict between a great corporation and the mass of the people upon a question of money. It is, Shall the cor-

poration carry the people along the streets at five cents or eight cents a head? It is a question of money; of money on both sides. A corporation which lusts to get rich confronts a people who are busy getting rich. The question has merits on both sides. If it be approached as a pure commercial question there is much to be said on either side. But the saddening thing about the situation is its indication that a corporation may do as it lists in violating all equities, in corrupting the springs of political purity, so long as it does not immediately and directly touch the pockets of the people. The question at issue can never be settled so long as the battle rages about the present immediate issue.

Another of the evils from the same spring is the lack of leisure which it entails. Nothing is more pathetic to the lover of his kind than to watch the faces of men of business where they most do congregate. They are eager, drawn, tense, full of anxious lines, restless, unsatisfied. And the pity of it all is that they themselves deeply long for rest. Every pastor has heard the groans of many a father of a family and provider of a household for that he is fastened like a horse in a treadmill in a set of conditions and necessities from which he sees no hope of escape.

In the midst of it all, high and noble things languish and perish for lack of space. There is no opportunity for interchange of human kindliness, there is no space for good fellowship.

We are all together tied to the swift rolling chariot of money. A few draw the chariot; one here and there rides in it; the rest are dragged after it by ever lengthening cords.

But to what purpose these wails? Why revile and abuse a condition of things which all agree to be incapable of change? Our real wants are increasing day by day. Our standard of comfort is ever rising higher and higher. Artificial wants are being ever newly created. Trade and commerce deliberately stimulate artificial wants in order that trade and commerce may have business to do in satisfying them. Why, then, cry out against a condition of things which is in the very nature of the case hopeless?

I cry out because the case is not hopeless. There are always a few who can see clearly enough to understand that a man's happiness "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he hath." When Professor Agassiz was advised by some of his shrewd business friends to turn to account his marvelous scientific knowledge, and thereby make himself rich, he replied: "I have no time to make money." One can fancy the bewildered look upon the faces of his friends. He was not a poor man, he had enough; but there was something that he valued more than money, and that was the opportunity to do the things he wanted. One of the sanest and most distinguished men of this city is a poor man. His household is simple and frugal. He

has a modest income. There is no luxury in his house, and no abundance on his table, but it is to his house that every man of distinction and woman of genius who visit the city turn their faces, as drawn by a natural attraction. It is there that they are entertained "with plain living and high thinking." There is peace and rest and comfort, outside the clamor and struggle of the streets, the shop, and the office. Probably the most Christlike minister of Christ that this country has seen, the man who did more than any other to set the truth upon a firm foundation and to relieve the wants of the poor, was Dr. Muhlenberg. When he died he left an estate of thirty dollars, but he left a name which will be fragrant for many a day.

It is possible, and it is wise, and there is no other wisdom in the premises. St. Paul was right, "Having food and raiment let us be content." For "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men. For the love of money is the root of all evil, and they that covet for it pierce themselves through with many sorrows."

L.

THE LAST SCENE.

"He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—Acts xvii. 31.

A very large section of the Christian world speaks of the present season as the Advent. During these four weeks the thought of the Church is directed to the "dim, far-off event toward which the whole creation moves." At all seasons of the year it speaks of righteousness and temperance, but just now it dwells upon judgment to come. It is worth while to ask, just exactly what does the Christian world mean by this phrase? Is it only a theological figment, or does it designate any actual event in the future which we may reasonably expect to occur? And if so, what is the ground of our belief in such a catastrophe? To this we may answer in the most definite way that the Christian world does expect an end of all things; and that that end is correlated in some way with an ethical separation which is being prepared for by all the persons and all the events which occupy the stage

up to the period of that event. "All the world's a stage and men and women players." The stage is a marvelous extended one: the players are so numerous they bewilder the imagination: the piece is one which stretches over such an incalculable period of history that it is always difficult to make out the plot and to distinguish the hero from the villain. But the mark of the religious man is a profound conviction that in it all there is a plot. He cannot bring himself to believe that things happen in a meaningless way, as they would in a world like "Alice's Wonderland." Things mean something. They go somewhere. To the religious mind it is simply incredible that generation after generation of human beings should rise up and lie down without any definite purpose either for humanity as a whole or for the individuals who compose it. It would seem, indeed, that every sane man must believe that there is some reasonable and intelligible purpose toward which all things move.

At this point Christian belief takes it up. It is not content to allow the belief in judgment to remain vague and formless. It asserts a time, a place, a method, and a Judge. But the grand finale is always thought of from the actors' point of view. Each of us is now playing his part, but we will be dead and turned to dust many a thousand centuries, probably, before the last act. Shall we have anything to do with that? And shall we be waked up to receive our pay? We

expect personally to be concerned in the transaction, and it will be a very serious business. If we could be quite sure that the same standard of judgment would hold good then which holds good now, we would not be very greatly disturbed. In point of fact, at present, most of us are judged by the world better than we really judge ourselves. If we could be sure that the world's verdict about us would stand forever, we would be pretty well content with it. It is not all that we wish, but it is so much better than we deserve that we would rather let the present verdict stand than to run the risk of having it opened.

But the teaching of Scripture, to the truth of which our deepest soul assents, is that many, if not most, of the verdicts passed upon men by their fellows will be modified or reversed. Many whom we pronounce good will certainly be pronounced bad. Many whom the world has condemned will be found to be saints. This is a commonplace of fiction and of the moralist. But it has a very serious side. It is always asserted by the Christian Scripture that the final assortment of men will be a perfectly equitable one, and also that it will be recognized as equitable both by the subject of it and by the spectator. The reason is that the decision will be based not only upon the facts of the case, but upon all the facts which bear upon the case. The trouble with our judgments of men is that we have not the facts before us. We are compelled to decide

upon incomplete evidence. But we do not rest with this as an ultimatum. We are quite aware that we neither judge nor are judged in righteousness.

With regard to the final decision Christianity teaches two things as of the essence of its belief. The first is that these decisions will be absolutely right ones. The assignment to each of what he must bear and what he may receive will be arranged with the most minute exactness. Some will be beaten with many stripes. Some will be beaten with few stripes. Some will not be beaten at all. To one will be given authority over five cities, and to another over ten. In a word, each man will receive judgment corresponding with absolute truthfulness to what he is.

The second thing is that the judgment will be an essentially humane judgment. That is to say it will in every case be a decision which will be accepted as right by all concerned, for the reason that it will be the judgment which humanity itself would decree in any case where humanity could see all the facts. When the judgment is set "the books will be opened." "The secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed." Acting upon the information which will then lie open to the sight of all who choose to look, the verdict will be passed upon every human being. It will be absolutely right from the human standpoint. To guarantee this it is to be conducted by "that Man whom He hath ordained and whereof He

hath given assurance in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Judgment is to be given by the "Son of Man." It is intrusted to him because He is the Son of Man. Speaking reverently, it is one of the ideas underlying the belief in the incarnation that God could not fairly judge men without Himself first becoming man. Because He shall have been in His own person "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" we may be sure that He will deal fairly not only with our sins, but with our temptations, "inasmuch as He Himself was in all points tempted, even as we are."

The belief in the final judgment, and in this kind of a final judgment, is directly contrary to a manner of looking at life which is very common. There are not a few who recognize a dramatic purpose in the movement of the world. They do not deny that it may lead up to a *dénouement.* But they do not conceive themselves personally to be concerned with this final event. They expect a steadfast progress in the race, and they hold it the duty of every man to contribute what he may to the future well-being of humanity. They look for their own immortality and their own judgment in the generations that come after them. The question which arises, however, when one hears this theory advanced, is, what stimulus and what restraint does it provide for the individual who is living now? That is to say, the multitude who are absorbed and well-nigh over-

whelmed in the constant struggle? who have daily needs and narrow cares? who neither have the leisure nor the inclination to consider the precise rôle they are called upon to play in the great drama of humanity? Does it make much difference to a man who is tempted to sin to say to him, If you yield you will infinitesimally retard the progress of humanity a thousand years from now? When one is confronted with a hard duty, does it encourage him much to say, If you do it the race will be a trifle further along ten thousand years from now than if you shrink from doing it? Does it offer any consolation to those who are in grief, any hope to those who are bereaved, any forgiveness to the sinful, or any rest to those who are weary or heavy laden? It would be foolish to deny that more than a few noble souls do take this view of personal and future existence. But it is true also that these would be high and noble souls in any case, and that their goodness is altogether independent of their religious belief.

The Christian belief on the other hand is that the dramatic tendency which all thoughtful men must see in human history, not only leads to a finale at some point in the future, but also that when that time comes the judgment must and will go back again over the whole ground which has been traversed, must pick up the individuals one by one, from the greatest to the most insignificant, and deal with each, not alone according to the

part which he has played or failed to play in the movement of the whole drama, but also as to the part which he has played concerning himself. Besides the great actors who can be seen to carry forward the movement of the piece upon the stage, there are myriads of supernumeraries—"soldiers, peasants, citizens." Within each one of these has gone forward a personal drama quite as intense and of far more importance to him than the movement on the great stage. Who shall say that it is not equally important in the eyes of God?

LI.

THE CHRISTIAN CHILD.

"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."—LUKE ii. 52.

THE Christ-child was like all other children in this particular, that "he learned wisdom by the things which he suffered." It is clear that from the start He was not exempted from that first and keenest form of suffering into which children enter. He was subject to His parents, and He went to school. These two things are the first crosses children bear—submission to authority, and learning under compulsion. The subsequent perfection of His character, speaking humanly, was due to the perfection of His early training. All His knowledge about religion cannot be referred to His teachers, but the beginning of it certainly must be.

When all the world has before it, as at Christmas tide, the picture of the Divine Child is a good time to ask the parents' attention to the question, "How are you rearing your child?" Nothing is more perplexing than the question how and what we shall have our children taught in

the region of religion. Shall we teach them ourselves? Shall we send them to Sunday school and have them taught there? Shall we leave them without teaching altogether? These three lines of action exhaust the situation. Either the parent must take charge of this or he must find somebody else to do it for him, or he must leave it undone. This last we fear is the course ordinarily pursued.

If one had it in his power to stop a hundred men and women haphazard on the street, and catechise them about "those things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health," he would probably educe very few, and those very unsatisfactory, answers. The truth is the average man knows almost nothing about religious matters. This is due to the fact that he has not been taught. The ordinary father and mother are anxious enough about what they call the "education" of their child. They send him to the best schools they can find. They see to it that the lessons there set are learned. The child is not very much consulted about the matter. If he likes his lesson well and good; if he doesn't like it he is likely to have to learn it anyway. This is because the value of a secular education in after-life is clearly seen and acted upon. But what shall be done for the moral and religious teaching? The Roman Catholic Church has much good ground to stand upon when it insists that real teaching in religion and morals must go on

side by side with secular education. There are very few who would call in question this general statement. Everybody admits in theory the value of religious training for children. Almost everybody questions, however, whether the Church can safely be trusted to conduct that training. I am among those who question this. But if the Church cannot, who can, and who will?

The present situation among American Protestants is unsatisfactory to the very last degree. It amounts to about this: If a child is naturally religious, and is fortunate enough to pick up here and there a few unrelated beliefs and facts, all very well. If, on the other hand, he be the average child, which is not hungry, as a rule, for learning of any kind, and so fails to pick up any knowledge of religion, all is equally well. As a rule we fear that parents do not give any real attention to the religious training of their children. In the majority of cases they are intrusted to the Sunday school. The Sunday-school teacher does the best that he or she can, but the best is very little. Few realize how little it is. There are no better men and women in the world than the average Sunday-school teachers, but their goodness does not make it any the more true that the children under their care are really taught. They cannot be taught in the nature of the case. In the first place the teachers are not persons who are trained to teach. And in the second place they have, as a rule, the very haziest

notions about what they wish to teach. And in the third place the children are not under their care long enough to be really taught anything. The good which the Sunday-school teacher does, and which is an incalculable good, is effected by the contagion of his or her own personality. The child, through them, comes to love goodness because he has learned to love a good man or woman. But this love of goodness does not teach him the truths of religion.

Is not the real explanation of the situation to be found in the fact that there is an almost universal skepticism as to whether there really is any such thing as religious truth? That there is religious feeling nobody questions. No one doubts that there is a difference between goodness and badness, and that goodness, when it is carried high enough, becomes emotional in its character, and therefore is called religion. But is it not also a fact that people generally are skeptical as to whether or not our religion rests upon any coherent set of facts or truths which are capable of being taught to children? It is not difficult to see why such a widespread skepticism should come into existence. It has been caused more by the foolish and wicked division among Christians than by any other one cause. There are more than a hundred churches, each one holding out a more or less formulated set of beliefs and declaring that these are they which a child in a Christian land should be taught as

truths. But each one believes that the other ninety-nine are false, or at least faulty, in their statements. The great world takes them at their word. It says to the divided Church, in effect, something like this: "You cannot secure the agreement of anything like the majority of yourselves to the doctrines which you say my child should be taught. Each of you says that the other one's statements are incorrect. I think very probably you are right. At any rate, I am puzzled as to what I shall teach my child."

It is the strangest thing in the world that Christian people do not seem at all to realize the evils which arise out of their wretched divisions. It is not alone that the schism renders impotent the whole Christian community to do those things which it could do if it acted in harmony, but it also has led to an utter confusion in the world's mind as to the nature and reality of religious truth. Of course, we all understand that behind all the rival systems of doctrine there is a catholic creed which we all believe, and which we are persuaded is founded upon facts. But this creed has become so overlaid and hidden out of sight by the secondary and trivial doctrines of denominations, that the world has nearly forgotten that there is such a thing in existence. The Church herself is grievously to blame in this particular.

But two wrongs do not make a right. If the

Church has been foolish and quarrelsome, and is self-seeking in each of its divisions, that is no reason why the people living in a Christian world must forget or ignore that Christianity must play a large part in their lives and the lives of their children. The religious faculty of a child is a thing which must be taken account of. It must be given something wholesome to feed upon or else it will either fill itself with hurtful things or will starve and pine away.

The things which a child should be taught are really not difficult to find. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount are facts. They have widespread implications, and all persons will by no means agree as to exactly what is implicated in each or all of them. But these are things which the religious sense of a nineteenth century child will receive and feed upon and assimilate. The outline of the religion under whose influence we live should at least be taught to every man who lives within its influence. No one who comes to age without this information ought to be called an intelligent person. He is not intelligent. He is wanting in knowledge which ought to be at every man's finger ends. Nor, again, is one who comes to age with his religious faculties empty a safe member of the community. He is a peril to himself, and he is always liable to become a menace to his fellows. No man who is destitute of religion is a safe man, for the

simple reason that he is not an entirely sane man. He is, to use a common phrase, "wanting." He is wanting in that very faculty or sense which ought to dominate and guide all the others.

I do not enter here upon any detailed statement of how such teaching should be given to a child. One thing is clear, that any man who has begotten and any woman who has borne a child are faithless to their highest duty if they willingly permit any capacity born with that child to perish for lack of cultivation, or to go astray from being badly trained. Practically, the difficulties in the way are not great. Such as they are, they will disappear before the earnest wish of those to whom God has given children, to do for those children in every regard "as they shall answer unto God."

LII.

THE CHRIST CHILD.

"The second man is the Lord from heaven."—1 CORINTHIANS XV. 47.

Two babes have been born into this world in whom the whole race has been concerned. The first was "Adam," the second was Jesus. The first grew to be human, the second came to know that He was divine. In the first the human animal took the step upward and found his place in the ranks of moral persons. In the second the man takes the ultimate step upward and takes his place among the sons of God. Where Adam was brought forth and where his cradle was rocked no one can say. Did prodigies attend it? Did savage beasts stand about it glaring and with bared fangs? Probably. But the child, after that God had fashioned him into a man, came "to know good from evil." His children increased and multiplied, delved and builded, prayed and fought and sang, and the earth through the ages teemed with men. But the children of Adam reached the limit of their capacities. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman,

to redeem them, that we might be called the sons of God."

The ruling idea of Christmas time is that God has, in some strange fashion, let himself into the life of humanity. What was not possible before the birth of the Christ-child is now natural. The whole of human life has been lifted up in some way, and set to go forward on a higher plane. As the Adamites were an advance upon the human brutes which went before them, and from whence Adam sprang, so the sons of God are an advance upon the sons of Adam from whence Christ sprang. This is the belief with which the Christian Scriptures chiefly concern themselves. They have little to say about the nature or attributes of God. They offer no code of morality. They speak but seldom, and then confusedly, about the future life. They present no fundamental system of doctrine or philosophy. But about one thing they never hesitate —the Christian is a new kind of creature. He is a man, but he is a new kind of man. He is born again, twice born. The foundation of his nature is Adamic; the building is Christian. He is the same kind of a person that Christ was and is. Jesus was "the first born among many brethren." A persistent heresy ever assails this truth. It assaults it as the serpent tried to strangle the infant Hercules in his cradle. It conceives of Jesus as an unique personality, who can have no real imitators and no progeny. It isolates Him

from both God and man, and makes Him the eternal monster! And it does this in the guise of reverence. Christianity has ever shown a strange reluctance to take Christ's own account of Himself. His account is marvelous enough, indeed. But it is a marvel which is consistent with itself. He is the founder of a new order of beings. He is the first-born among many brethren.

To this is due the persistent and ever-recurring interest in Jesus Christ. A thousand others have played a thousand times more conspicuous roles than He, and have been dead and buried and forgotten centuries ago. The interest in Jesus is always fresh. He has a deeper hold upon men's thoughts now at the end of the century than He had at the beginning of it. Each century finds a new interest in Him. Theology busies itself at one time with Him, and when it fancies it has exhausted Him, history takes up the task. When history has said its last word, sociology begins to study Christ. Humanity cannot long remove its eyes from Him. The reason is, men feel that they are kin to Him, and that on that side of their descent their hope lies. The Christian belief is surely so amazing that nothing but the evidence of experience would keep it alive for a single year. It ventures to believe that at a definite point in history, at a place and time well considered and appropriate, there was produced a human personality in

whom humanity took the final step upward and became divine. The Christian race stands at Christmastide at the cradle of its ancestor.

But what of the "Second Man's" progeny? How does the Divine Man propagate his kind? We are prone to think there is no mystery in the transmission of life by descent. Men beget, and women bear children according to the laws of nature. Yes, according to the laws of nature. What laws? What do you mean by a law? What do you mean by nature? We know nothing but facts. The "imperious instinct of propagation" perpetuates the race of Adam after the fashion which is "natural" to that race. The imperious instinct of propagation also carries forward and outward the race of the Second Man. We have to do with facts. The Christ-like type of man is now found in the world. It is not a "sport," or sporadic individual here and there: it is all Christendom. The new man does not move forward with an equal step any more than the old man, but he moves. He is subject to strange "reversions" to a lower type, just as the natural man is prone to revert to the brute. He falls far short of the ideal "measure of the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus." But the ideal is here. It is slowly but surely realizing itself. Any man who will look can see the Christ in human society. His mighty spirit moves beneath it like Enceladus under the hills of Ætna, breaking up the crusts of ancient

wrongs, making channels for the deep springs of water to burst up for the solace of the slave, the toiler, the down-trodden, and hopeless. The Christ is abroad. Some see Him. Still more ask longingly, "Show us the Christ." The whole world feels his presence. This week all try to become like little children. We kneel about his cradle and call each other brother.

THE END.

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